

THE WORSHIP OF ROMAN *DIVAE*: THE JULIO-CLAUDIANS TO THE  
ANTONINES

By

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*optimae meae familiae* Joe, Kathy, Joe, and Rachel Muich

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This study will examine and evaluate the extant evidence of *diva* worship in the Roman Empire to prove that the cults of *divae* were used throughout the Empire as a means of political exploitation for individuals, but also as cults of true believers. The study will begin with Livia Drusilla, the wife of Augustus, an empress who convinced the public that she deserved consecration. The following chapters will compare and contrast the remaining *divae* from the Julio-Claudian family, the families of Trajan and Hadrian, and the Antonine family. Literary, numismatic, sculptural, and inscriptional evidence is considered with each *diva*. The intent of this study is to prove that the cults of the *divae* were important, and should be included in these ongoing discussions about the Imperial cult and Roman religion.

## INTRODUCTION

The difficulty in assessing the importance of the worship of *divae* in the Roman Empire lies in the nature of the Imperial cult and in the nature of the extant evidence of worship. It is easy to speculate about the motivations for deifying a Roman empress, but to ascertain whether a woman was deified because of belief that she was indeed divine or because it was the natural course of honors for a member of the Imperial household, one must make assumptions about the belief systems of the Romans as individuals and as a collective entity, as well as make assumptions about the importance or unimportance of each individual woman to those who conferred divinity upon her and those who purported to worship her. In addition to the necessary assumptions, there must also be some consideration of the nature of the Imperial cult and its relationship to women as worshippers, celebrants of ritual, and receivers of worship. This is a difficult task because the extant evidence often recognizes a celebrant of a particular cult, but rarely outlines her duties as a celebrant, let alone any rituals over which she may have presided. The task is made more onerous by the lack of substantial scholarship on the place of women in the Imperial cult. While theories on the importance of emperor worship, the nature of emperor worship, and the origins of emperor worship abound, there are few about the worship of imperial women.

The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the extant evidence of *diva* worship in the Roman Empire to prove that the cults of *divae* were used throughout the

Empire as a means of political exploitation for individuals, but also as cults of true believers. The actual practice of worship of *divae*, so far as we can tell, does not differ greatly from the worship of divinities with faithful worshippers. The study will begin with Livia Drusilla, the wife of Augustus, an empress who convinced the public that she deserved consecration. The following chapters will compare and contrast the remaining *divae* from the Julio-Claudian family, the families of Trajan and Hadrian, and the Antonine family. These parameters were set because of the amount of evidence that survived pertaining to them.

Literary, numismatic, sculptural, and inscriptional evidence are considered with each *diva*. Each category of evidence has its own merits and problems. First of all, literary evidence may not be relied upon to present a truthful picture of the life of a Roman empress, the reasons for her consecration, and the nature of her worship. The era of the Julio-Claudians is the least troublesome, since there is more than one source with which to compare and contrast information. The years of the Trajanic family and the Antonine family are depicted primarily by the *Historia Augusta*, a source which merits its own thesis regarding its accuracy.<sup>1</sup> Supplementary works, though not of the historical genre in the strictest sense, may offer a sense of the personality of the *diva*, or the nature of her relationship to the emperor.

Giacosa has called coinage a “sensitive seismograph of imperial politics.”<sup>2</sup> There is no other medium that disseminated the image of an empress or *diva* so completely through the Roman Empire. Men and women of every social standing handled coins in their lifetime, and through currency were able to own a picture of the emperor’s wife and

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<sup>1</sup> See Syme, Ronald, *Historia Augusta Papers* (Oxford 1983), and *Emperors and Biography* (Oxford 1971).

<sup>2</sup> Giacosa (1970) 34.

to visually receive her message.<sup>3</sup> Since not all coins were minted in Rome, the legends on the coins of various provinces in the East and West serve as a reminder that the worship of *divae* was not dictated only by the decree of the Senate, but also by the beliefs of the people of the Empire as well. The collection of coins examined in this study is not a complete collection of every coin pertaining to a *diva*, but rather a representative collection of the types attributed to each *diva*.

Sculptural evidence is harder to evaluate than numismatic evidence because there is rarely any surviving legend or inscription to identify the individual or group which may have existed during the Empire. As a result, scholars have had to resort to a system of dating and identifying by examining hairstyles, dress, and portrait types. While it was true that one portrait type could be sent throughout the Empire as a template for public art, it is not always clear to us which type belongs to which empress, especially if there are no clear portraits of an empress on a coin. Sculpture, though, can display certain elements attributed to a *diva* more clearly than can a coin. The sculptures positively identified as *divae* display the women wearing the corn ears of Ceres and the *infulae* of priestesses, among other things. These images make associations on a grand scale, with greater detail than coins.

Inscriptional evidence offers the most unadulterated evidence of exploitation and sincerity in the cults of the *divae*. Names and offices of the dedicators are often inscribed along with the dedication, as well as the type of sacrifice offered, and even the reason for the offering. Collections of inscriptions can report the locations of each inscription and the material on which it was written. Inscriptions are not without their detractions, however. First of all, they are often incomplete, and we must rely on the editors of

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<sup>3</sup> Keltanen (2002)106.

collections to reconstruct them. Secondly, some inscriptions do not give the above stated information. The entire inscription can consist of the name of the dedicatee, leaving the researcher to wonder to what image or building the inscription was attached. Finally, it is not always clear to whom an inscription is addressed. *Div*a Matidia, the niece of Trajan, had a daughter named Matidia who was quite wealthy and earned many dedications on her own.<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of her name on inscriptions with her grandmother, mother, and sister, who were all *divae*, can lead to confusion about her divine status, and even about her identity. Faustina Maior and Faustina Minor present a similar problem. The mother and daughter were both deified, but most inscriptions do not add “Maior” or “Minor” or even “II” after their names to distinguish between them. Usually the names of their husbands are included with theirs on inscriptions, which can dispel the mystery, but for the inscriptions that only name the dedicatee, there is no help. Most of the inscriptions in this study come from the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. The collection is by no means complete, and very few of the important Greek inscriptions are considered, but the cited inscriptions offer an overview of the various types of dedications and reasons for dedicating.

Simon Price wrote that “religion should be treated not as an emotional but as an intellectual enterprise which attempts to provide a way of interpreting and ordering reality.”<sup>5</sup> In the early Empire, the reality the Roman people faced was a government increasingly controlled by one man and an empire that encompassed many cultures with many different ways of “ordering reality.” The idea of the Imperial cult as a way of interpreting the power of the emperor was not a Roman origination. The Greeks had

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<sup>4</sup> Boatwright (1991) 522, 524.

<sup>5</sup> Price (1980) 29.

already been establishing cults to the living emperor since Alexander the Great.<sup>6</sup> For the Greeks, equating their ruler with divine powers was an acceptable way of honoring him. The emperor was like a god in that he was the source of “unpredictable power and benefaction.”<sup>7</sup>

For the Romans in the Late Republic, this was not so. The establishment of an Imperial cult was one of the results of the changes in Roman religion from the Republic to the early Empire. One man became the focus of many realms of Roman culture; politics, the military and religion were identified more and more with only one man. The establishment of the Imperial cult, then, walked a line between the traditional religious rituals and the new experience of autocratic rule.<sup>8</sup> The idea of identifying men with gods was not foreign in Rome: Julius Caesar himself and Octavian after him claimed divine ancestry even before they were deified.<sup>9</sup> The belief that a dead man became a god, however, is more difficult to extrapolate from the sources, but there does seem to be a belief that Julius Caesar was a god, and Augustus’ popularity suggests that even if the populace was not convinced he was divine, they were comfortable with calling him so. Nevertheless, the honor was not something which could be given freely to whomever happened to be ruling, and in fact, those ruling were careful to avoid such honors while alive, as will be discussed below.

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<sup>6</sup> Fox (1987) 40.

<sup>7</sup> Fox (1987) 40.

<sup>8</sup> Beard, North, and Price (1998) 169.

<sup>9</sup> For Caesar: Suet. *Caes.*, 88: *stella crinita per septem continuos dies fulsit exoriens circa undecimam horam, creditumque est animam usse Caesaris in caelum recepti*. For Octavian, Suet. *Aug.*, 94.4: *Augustum natum esse mense decimo et ob hoc Apollinis filium existimatem*. Dio Cass., 45.1: –λλως τε καὶ ὅτι ὁ Ἀτταεὶ δεινὰς ἄχρῳρξετο ἰκ τοῦ Ἀπίλλωνος ἀπὶ ν κεκυηκῆναι, ὅτι καταδαρ-θοῦσα ποτε ἰν ναὲ ἀποθῶδρ• κονττεινι μενυσθαι ἰνὶ μισε καὶ ἄδι τοῦτο τὲ ἔχνουμῖνω χρῖ νᾶ ἑ-τεχε. Beard, North, and Price (1998) 145; Flory (1995) 128.

Though it will probably always be unclear how the Romans related their *divi* and *divae* to *dei* and *deae*,<sup>10</sup> it is clear that there was a system of worship in place, and the institution was an important part of the bureaucracy of the Empire. Taylor interprets the Imperial cult mainly as a political tool, as it created new offices of state-sanctioned religion.<sup>11</sup> Fox suggests that the Imperial cult institution was exploited for the opportunities of service and stature it offered.<sup>12</sup> Gordon interprets the acquisition of a priestly position as a system of patronage. No real power was conferred upon the priest, but the appointment initiated a relationship of “dependence, gratitude, and respect.”<sup>13</sup> Alföldy asserts that there were social, political, and economic advantages to being a part of the Imperial cult system.<sup>14</sup> Even *liberti* and slaves could be involved in the Imperial cult: *liberti* were the *magistri* of the cult of the Compitales for the worship of the Genius of Augustus, while slaves could be the *ministri* of the shrines.<sup>15</sup> Whether the rewards were tangible or symbolic, the priests of the Imperial cult were respected and took great care to include their other public offices, duties, and wealth to any record of offering.

There were a few classes of priests and priestesses who celebrated rituals for the Imperial cult. In Rome the priest was called a *flamen*, and his wife the *flaminica*, who

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<sup>10</sup> The *OLD* makes the following distinctions: A *dea* is always a goddess, and a *deus* is defined as a god, though there are some examples of using *deus* with mortals: *parentum suum Caesar ... fecit deum*, Vell. 2.126.1; *edictum domini deique nostri*, Mart. 5.8.1 (referring to Domitian, who was to be addressed as “our lord and god”); *Vae, inquit, puto deus fio*, Suet. *Vesp.*, 23.4 (this is Vespasian’s estimation, not the general public’s). *Divi* and *divus* can be used to define the gods and goddesses: *divae Veneris nurus*, Verg. *Aen.*, 2.787, *hominum divorumque voluptas*, Luc., 1.1; they are also the titles applied to deified members of the imperial family.

<sup>11</sup> Taylor (1931) 219.

<sup>12</sup> Fox (1987) 40.

<sup>13</sup> Gordon (1996) 233.

<sup>14</sup> Alföldy (1996) 255.

<sup>15</sup> Zanker (1988) 129, 131.

was often in charge of the cults of *divae*. In the provinces, the priests were called *sacerdotes*, perhaps as a way to distinguish between Roman and provincial cult systems. Other groups of priests were involved with the Imperial cult: the Vestal Virgins, for example, became increasingly important to the imperial family in the early Empire. They were present at military triumphs, at the dedication of the Ara Pacis, and they were put in charge of the cult of the *diva* Livia.<sup>16</sup>

The Arval Brethren were also important players in the institution of the Imperial cult. The Arval Brethren were a sodality of priests who were active in the Republic, though they can be found nowhere in the annals of the period.<sup>17</sup> They were revived in 29 B.C. by Octavian, and their earliest extant document dates to 21 B.C.<sup>18</sup> The Arval Brethren seemed to originally be concerned with the worship of the Dea Dia, and supposedly held their meetings and rituals in a grove outside the city, though many of the sacrifices took place within the city, on the Capitol or in the temple of *divus* Augustus.<sup>19</sup> The *Acta* of the Arval Brethren were inscribed on marble near their sacred grove,<sup>20</sup> and their records are detailed enough to give a good indication of the social strata of the members and the intricacies of their rituals. Syme's study of the Arval Brethren reveals that it was Augustus' intent in reviving the Arval Brethren "to honor and reward the already illustrious."<sup>21</sup> He notes that the Brothers, throughout their traceable history, were

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<sup>16</sup> Beard, North, and Price 1998) 194.

<sup>17</sup> Syme (1980) 2. Only Varro mentions them in *On the Latin Language*.

<sup>18</sup> Syme (1980) 2.

<sup>19</sup> Beard, North, and Price (1998) 195.

<sup>20</sup> Syme (1980) v.

<sup>21</sup> Syme (1980) v.

made up of the middle ranks of the Senate, men who most likely would not be appointed to priesthoods or consulates.<sup>22</sup> Syme suggests that Augustus wanted the Arval Brethren to be “dignified and decorative,”<sup>23</sup> an institution in which notable civil servants would be visible in the worship of Imperial *divi* and *divae*, but one in which actual power and duties were limited. The Arval Brethren, in this respect, are an example of the ways Augustus and the political powers of the time could manipulate the institution of the Imperial cult to their advantage.

Beard, North, and Simon point out that there was no such thing as one Imperial cult, but rather a series of different cults sharing an emphasis on the worship of the emperor, his family or predecessors.<sup>24</sup> This was nowhere more apparent than in the Roman colonies and municipalities which assimilated emperor worship into their own native cults. The Imperial cult came to the provinces in many ways. One was through the military, which kept a calendar marking the dates of celebrations of birthdays of *divi* and *divae*, which was in step with the records of the Arval Brethren back in Rome.<sup>25</sup> Systems of Imperial worship could be set by the Roman government, which Wardman interprets as a means of Romanization acceptable to the provinces.<sup>26</sup> Each community in the provinces, however, could set up their own cults by their own accord as well.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Syme (1980) 77.

<sup>23</sup> Syme (1980) 100.

<sup>24</sup> Beard, North, and Simon (1998) 318.

<sup>25</sup> Beard, North, and Simon (1998) 325.

<sup>26</sup> Wardman (1982) 88.

<sup>27</sup> Beard, North, and Simon (1998) 349.

Implementing the Imperial cult was a different task in the East and in the West. In the East, the Imperial cult was established “from above,” that is to say, by the imperial government. The Greek east was already quite comfortable with this concept of emperor worship, as mentioned above, and therefore it was an accepted part of the community. In the West, however, the cult was established “from below,” meaning there was no systematized state religion at hand.<sup>28</sup> The territories of Britain, Gaul, and the regions of the Danube and the Rhine were relatively untouched by Roman culture, but Narbonensis, Africa, and Hispania were settled by Roman immigrants.<sup>29</sup> There was therefore a situation where parts of the west were already establishing the Roman cults to which the Roman immigrants were accustomed, while others were integrating Roman customs into their own cultural mainstays.

The provincial cult also had a means of distinguishing their priesthoods from those of Rome. *Flamines* were priests of the official state deities, and *sacerdotes* the priests for imported deities. Fishwick suggests that the titles may also have had something to do with the means of worship: a *flamen* served a cult based in a temple, while a *sacerdos* served a cult based around an altar.<sup>30</sup> Grether postulates that a *flaminica* was more common for a priestess of the living empress, and a *sacerdos* more common for a priestess of a dead empress.<sup>31</sup> Service to the Imperial cult was one way to assert importance and influence in the provinces, and one way in which a wealthy citizen could

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<sup>28</sup> Fishwick (1987) 93.

<sup>29</sup> Fishwick (1987) 93.

<sup>30</sup> Fishwick (1987) 93.

<sup>31</sup> Grether (1946) 249-250.

distinguish himself or herself.<sup>32</sup> In the west the cult was served by slaves and freedmen who had a part of the worship of the Lares and Genius at the crossroads.<sup>33</sup> The Imperial cult became important in these regions because it offered new offices that could be held by freedmen or local aristocracy.<sup>34</sup> It offered a new opportunity for the breakdown of social stratification not available at Rome.

The imperial family was worshipped in many ways. Often emperors or empresses were honored when a territory took on the name of the emperor who founded it, such as Julia Cirta,<sup>35</sup> or when cities were renamed in their honor, such as Juliopolis in Bithynia, Trajanopolis on Phrygia, or Hadrianopolis in Thrace.<sup>36</sup> Then there were the more active forms of worship, such as sacrifices of animals, incense, ritual cakes, and lamps, as well as public festivals.<sup>37</sup> The rituals of the Arval Brethren included animal sacrifice, usually ox to men, cows to women, and occasionally a bull to the Genius of the emperor. They also burned incense, rubbed oil on the cult statues, and lit candles as part of their ritual.<sup>38</sup> In addition there were countless images of the deified Imperial family erected in their honor across the empire, from statues and busts to portraits on coins.

Price has questioned who or what exactly is being worshipped in many of these rituals. Because there is little extant evidence describing the duties of *flamines* and *sacerdotes*, the language left behind in inscriptions and in the *Acta* of the Arval Brethren

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<sup>32</sup> Taylor (1931) 212.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor (1931) 214.

<sup>34</sup> Taylor (1931) 219.

<sup>35</sup> Butcher (1988) 47.

<sup>36</sup> Butcher (1988) 46.

<sup>37</sup> Price (1980) 29, 30, 32.

<sup>38</sup> MacMullen (1981) 45.

becomes of utmost importance in determining the recipient of worship. In many instances, especially in the east, sacrifices were not made directly to the emperor, but rather on behalf of the emperor, perhaps for his health, safety, or in thanksgiving to him as a benefactor.<sup>39</sup> This practice is also found in the *Acta* of the Arval Brethren, when, in the reign of Augustus, they sacrificed on behalf of the Imperial family, but not to the family as divinities. There were also sacrifices made to the *genius* or *iuno* of emperors or empresses. Though it is not exactly clear what a *genius* or a *iuno* is, it represented some sort of spirit of the male or female head of the family and was connected to the worship of the Lares, Penates, and Vesta.<sup>40</sup> Sacrifices of bulls to the Genius of the emperor, the head of the Imperial family, were common in the reigns of Caligula and Nero.

It is also clear, though, in the *Acta* of the Arval Brethren, that the deified emperors and empresses themselves were recipients of sacrifices, just as a *genius* or *iuno* or a member of the Capitoline Triad. Price attributes this to the Roman attempt to classify the types of divinities they worshipped: a *divus* or a *diva* was different from a *deus* or a *dea*, but was in fact divine, and so higher than a common man.<sup>41</sup> This left them with no qualms about sacrificing to an emperor who was once a man.

The emperor had a role to play in the Imperial cult as well. Though it was the Senate who consecrated a member of the Imperial family, the emperor had to ask for the conferral from the Senate.<sup>42</sup> The ceremony of consecration for an emperor included a

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<sup>39</sup> Price (1980) 41.

<sup>40</sup> Rose (1923) 59; Flory (1995) 128.

<sup>41</sup> Price (1980) 36.

<sup>42</sup> Wardman (1982) 82.

lavish funeral capped by the release of an eagle, a symbol of his spirit rising to heaven.<sup>43</sup> There is no evidence of a corresponding ceremony for empresses. The motivations for deifying an emperor or empress could be endless, but Wardman points to a display of *pietas* as a particularly compelling force. By deifying his predecessor, an emperor proves to the public that he understands whence his power came, and he was mindful of his debt of gratitude.<sup>44</sup>

However, as Simpson argues, consecration by the Senate was not just a matter of honoring a predecessor. In the perception of many literate Romans, consecration actually created deities, powers capable of hearing and answering prayers.<sup>45</sup> This is borne out by the rituals of the Arval Brethren, among others, but there is no real explanation as to how a Roman made the transition in belief that the emperor was a man to the belief that the emperor was a god.

Image and art were the most powerful tools for spreading an Imperial message throughout the Empire. In an empire in which not everyone was literate, the association and assimilation<sup>46</sup> of divine attributes on statues and coins did more to connect the Imperial family with the divine than any decree of the Senate or any inscription of *fasti*. Zanker calls Roman imperial art the “standardized visual language” of the Empire.<sup>47</sup> Statues and coins allowed people in the far reaches of the Empire to know what the

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<sup>43</sup> Herodian, 4, offers a full description of the ceremony.

<sup>44</sup> Wardman (1982) 83.

<sup>45</sup> Simpson (1996) 67.

<sup>46</sup> Spaeth (1996) 119. Association represents indirect identification with the divine, such as including the images of gods or goddesses on the reverses of coins. Assimilation was more rare – the attributes and titles of divinities were applied directly to the emperor or empress.

<sup>47</sup> Zanker (1988) 335.

Imperial family looked like: how they wore their hair, what clothing they wore, and what their facial features were. At the same time, these same media could also impart the values and virtues the emperor wished to propagate throughout the Empire by using recognizable symbols in conjunction with the images of the ruling family.<sup>48</sup>

But what about the empresses? How do women fit into this system of priesthoods, ritual, symbol and religion? Was the Imperial cult really a vehicle for the strengthening of the emperor's hold on the Empire, or was it really a religious cult built on the premise that members of the Imperial family could hear and answer the prayers of their believers? I suggest that it was both, and that the deified empresses were an integral part of both processes – of strengthening Imperial bureaucracy through rich priests and benefactors, and of “ordering the reality” of Roman beliefs.

The actual practice of worship of *divae*, so far as we can tell, does not differ greatly from the worship of *divi*. Roman empresses were consecrated by decree of the Senate, just as Roman emperors. However, because the women themselves did not run the Empire, the images attributed to them did a double duty. On the one hand, they images associated the empress directly with the divine in her own right. On the other hand, they associated the symbols of feminine divinity with the principate of the emperor. The actions of the empresses and other members of the Imperial family, for good or ill, reflected directly onto the emperor and his character. Therefore, it was of utmost importance to portray the imperial women as models of Roman femininity, possessing the qualities which made them most helpful to their husbands, sons, or brothers. The association and assimilation of the attributes of Ceres with a *diva*, for example, suggests two things: first of all, that the *diva* herself was abundantly fertile, and secondly, in an

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<sup>48</sup> Zanker (1988) 336.

indirect sense, that the principate as a whole could ensure agricultural and human fertility.<sup>49</sup> The assimilation of attributes was most common on sculpture, where there was enough material available to include intricate details of divinity.<sup>50</sup> By looking at a statue of Livia wearing ears of corn and holding sheaths of poppies, an individual could determine, without being told, that Livia had assimilated the attributes of Ceres and was supposed to represent fertility and plenty. The association of divine attributes was more common on coins,<sup>51</sup> where reverses could be used to conjure the image of a specific goddess with a few identifying characteristics.

Provincial communities were the earliest worshippers of empresses – not hampered by Roman sanction, they were free to create cults and worship as they chose, as Livia had a cult dedicated to her in her lifetime at Emerita.<sup>52</sup> There were several monuments to imperial women throughout Spain: busts of Livia at Segobriga and dedications to *diva* Drusilla at Valeria.<sup>53</sup> The names of cities themselves are witnesses to the popularity of the *divae*: there was also a Plotinopolis in Thrace and a Marcianopolis in Moesia.<sup>54</sup> Of course, at Rome the worship of *divae* was made clear on the tablets of the *Acta* of the Arval Brethren, which recorded not only the sacrifices to *diva* Drusilla, *diva* Augusta, and *divae* Poppaea and Claudia, but also sacrifices to the *iuno* of Julia Augusta.

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<sup>49</sup> Spaeth (1996) 121.

<sup>50</sup> See the art of the Ara Pacis, in particular. Also consider the inscription of the statue to Livia in Magna Leptis with the inscription CERERI AUGUSTAE. Livia actually became Ceres in name and in image.

<sup>51</sup> Keltanen (2002) 109.

<sup>52</sup> Fishwick (1987) 157.

<sup>53</sup> Curchin (1996) 146.

<sup>54</sup> Butcher (1988) 46.

Though the worship of *divae* has not been explored nearly as thoroughly as that of the *divi*, it is part of an ongoing discussion of the nature of the Roman Imperial cult. The basis of belief in *divi* and *divae* is not clearly understood: did mortals become divine because the Senate made them so, or were they already divine before the decree? Is the Imperial cult simply an elaborate system of implementing Imperial power and complimenting the Imperial family, or is there something in the relationship of the people with the ruling family that we do not understand? This study cannot answer these questions and will not attempt to. The intent of this study is to prove that the cults of the *divae* were important, and should be included in these ongoing discussions about the Imperial cult and Roman religion.

## CHAPTER 1 LIVIA DRUSILLA

### 1.1 Introduction

The first deified woman of the Roman Empire was Julia Drusilla, the sister of the third Roman emperor, Caligula, but it is Livia Drusilla, the wife of Augustus, who is the paradigm to which all other empresses were compared. Livia's record of public service and her honored status were a part of Roman politics and society for generations, and the history of her cult spans from the early years of Augustus' principate to the Antonine dynasty.<sup>1</sup> Though she was not the first woman deified by the Senate, she was still the ideal *diva*.

The deification and worship of Livia reveal many things about the worship of *divae* and the process of deification. Livia, based on the amount and the nature of surviving inscriptions and artwork, was actually believed to be divine, perhaps more so than any other *diva*. The establishment of Livia's cult also offered more chances of political and social advancement in Rome and in the provinces to those who administered the cult rites. Livia's worshippers were a diverse lot: there were individuals who, convinced by her public works that Livia merited deification, believed that she was truly divine. There were also those individuals who used her deification as an opportunity for political advancement, and therefore their praises and dedications to her held an ulterior motive.

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<sup>1</sup> Grether (1946) 233.

Though Livia Drusilla, the wife of Augustus, had earned the respect of the Senate and the love of the Roman people through her patronage, she was not deified until the reign of Claudius in A.D. 41. Livia's son Tiberius, perhaps displaying a sensitivity to the suspicions of the Roman people that Rome was falling into the hands of a dynasty,<sup>2</sup> was notoriously wary of accepting divine honors for himself, and flatly refused many honors the Senate and provincial bureaucrats offered to him. He refused the name of *Pater Patriae* on many occasions, and he did not permit anything to be sworn on his deeds in the Senate.<sup>3</sup> He also refused to allow Farther Spain to build a temple to himself and his mother, stating, in a speech to the Senate, that he wished to enjoy only those honors suitable to a mortal man.<sup>4</sup>

In another petition, the people of the Greek city of Gythium<sup>5</sup> asked Tiberius' permission to pay divine honors to Augustus, Tiberius and Livia. Tiberius replied that Augustus should be honored as a god, that Tiberius himself wanted honors appropriate to men, and that Livia could answer for herself. He did not allow temples, *flamines* or priests to be decreed to him, and he did not allow statues of himself to be dedicated without permission. The images he did sanction he did so on the condition that they not be placed among the images of the gods.<sup>6</sup>

Tiberius' rejection of the proffered honors convinced some of his awareness that Rome was perhaps not quite ready for an *imperator*; but the rejection of honors for his

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<sup>2</sup> Wood (1999) 81.

<sup>3</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.72.1.

<sup>4</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.37-38.

<sup>5</sup> AE 1929, no. 99-100, quoted in Lewis and Reinhold (1990) 521.

<sup>6</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 26.

mother led contemporary Roman writers to believe that he was either resentful or afraid of his mother's power and influence in the Senate. Recent discussion suggests he may have been struggling to find a balance between imperial extravagance and Republican sensibility, and that he felt that high honors given to any member of the Roman family were a sure sign of an empire. Tiberius' policy on the Imperial cult displayed *pietas* toward his stepfather,<sup>7</sup> but led historians to question his feelings for his mother. His general policy regarding divine honors was that he discouraged actual cults to living persons in Italy, but outside Italy he was careful to regulate his own cult and the cult of the *domus Augusta* without detracting from the cult of *divus* Augustus.<sup>8</sup> Whatever Tiberius' motives, Roman historians catalogued the slights he showed his mother in his lifetime. He bristled at the idea of adding "son of Julia" to his name, as proposed by the Senate, and did not allow his mother a lictor,<sup>9</sup> which was an unprecedented honor for a woman. He refused to allow her to be called *parens patriae*, though the Senate called for it.<sup>10</sup> Tiberius also refused to change the name of the month of September to Tiberius, and the month of October to Livium, for Livia.<sup>11</sup> Because of Tiberius' persistence, Livia went without the high honors the Senate proposed.

### 1.2 Literary Evidence of the Worship of Livia Drusilla

Much has been written about Livia's role in the foundation of the Empire and the manipulation of the Julio-Claudian house. From 35 B.C. to 9 B.C. her importance was

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<sup>7</sup> Taylor (1929) 93.

<sup>8</sup> Grether (1946) 234.

<sup>9</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.1.

<sup>10</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 50.

<sup>11</sup> Suet. *Tib.* 26.

not as great as it would become, since Marcellus and Agrippa were still available to become Augustus' heirs. Tiberius and Drusus, Livia's children, held unclear roles in the family, and so Livia herself was not as visible in the public eye.<sup>12</sup> Though Livia was not deified until 41 A.D., the Roman senators and people honored her extravagantly during her lifetime and after her death. Livia's controversial and powerful position in the imperial household is universally reported by contemporary historians. It is this influence in the Senate and Augustus' reliance on her good counsel that led many to believe that Livia merited deification. Though her deification followed on the heels of Drusilla, the difference between the women could not have been greater.

Livia's power within the Senate was considerable. Many individuals were "saved" from Senatorial scrutiny because of her intercession,<sup>13</sup> and Dio Cassius writes that she took part in senatorial proceedings as though she had full senatorial powers.<sup>14</sup> Livia was also a magnanimous patron. She was, by law, allowed to inherit more money than the original amount legislated by the *lex Voconia*.<sup>15</sup> Livia was enormously wealthy in her own right, and because she could administer her own property, she used the opportunities to gain allies and improve public life. On a political level, Dio Cassius suggests that she saved the lives of many senators and even helped to pay for some of their daughters' dowries.<sup>16</sup> She erected a temple of Concordia with her own money,<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Flory (1993) 298.

<sup>13</sup> Haterius, (Tac. *Ann.* 1.13), Placinae, who was part of the Pisonian conspiracy, (Tac. *Ann.* 3.17), Urgulania, also involved in the Pisonian conspiracy, and who was protected from the Senate twice by Livia, (Tac. *Ann.* 4.21).

<sup>14</sup> Dio Cassius, 56.46.

<sup>15</sup> Dio Cassius, 56.10.

<sup>16</sup> Dio Cassius, 58.2.

and also used her money to support men with political ambitions – the future emperor Galba was a recipient of her generosity when she left him the significant sum of 50 million *sesterces* in her will.<sup>18</sup>

At Augustus' death, she inherited one third of his estate.<sup>19</sup> She also became his priestess, and was finally allowed a lictor only when she was performing her priestly duties.<sup>20</sup> Livia was allowed to sit with the Vestal Virgins in the theatre,<sup>21</sup> she was enrolled among mothers of three children when Drusus died,<sup>22</sup> and Tiberius dedicated a precinct to her on the first day of his consulship.<sup>23</sup> Livia died at age 86,<sup>24</sup> and Tacitus writes that she had a modest (*modicum*) funeral, at which her grandson Gaius, not her son Tiberius, gave her eulogy.<sup>25</sup> The Senate decreed that Roman women would mourn a full year for Livia's death. She was buried in the Mausoleum of Augustus, and the Senate voted to erect an arch in her honor, perhaps as a kind of substitute deification.<sup>26</sup> This arch, an honor never before granted to a woman, was never built. Tiberius did not allow

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<sup>17</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, 6.637-640.

<sup>18</sup> Suet., *Galba*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Suet, *Aug.* 161.

<sup>20</sup> Dio Cassius, 56. 46.

<sup>21</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.16.

<sup>22</sup> Dio Cassius, 55.2.

<sup>23</sup> Dio Cassius, 55.8.

<sup>24</sup> Dio Cassius, 58.2.

<sup>25</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 5.1.

<sup>26</sup> Flory (1995) 132.

public funds to be spent on the arch, and promised that he himself would erect it with his own money.<sup>27</sup>

There is little indication among the Roman historians of Livia's perceived divinity while she was alive. Ovid, however, while he was in exile, wasted no words in equating the empress to goddesses. Of course his position of a *persona non grata* greatly influenced his words, but he does present a picture of personal piety which, though it may not be sincere on his part, may indicate the role of Livia and the imperial household in everyday life. Ovid evidently had a *lararium* of the imperial family in his home while in exile, one that contained the same images that would be found in any public gallery in Rome.<sup>28</sup> In his letter to Cottus, Ovid thanks him for sending the images of Caesar so that his could join the other images in the *lararium*:

*Redditus est nobis Caesar cum Caesare nuper,  
quos mihi misisti, Maxime Cotte, deos,  
utque tuum munus numerum quem debet haberet,  
est ibi Caesaribus Livia iuncta suis.*<sup>29</sup>

He also admonishes his wife to finish the honorary rituals for the imperial household, giving incense and unmixed wine to the gods, from which Augustus and his line came:

*sed prius impostia sanctis altaribus igni  
tura fer ad magnos vinoque pura deos,  
e quibus ante omnes Augustum numen adora  
progeniemque piam participemque tori.*<sup>30</sup>

Finally in a letter to Graecinus, Ovid insists that he is pious and shows the appropriate honors to the imperial household:

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<sup>27</sup> Dio Cassius, 58.2.

<sup>28</sup> Zanker (1998) 265.

<sup>29</sup> Ovid, *Pont.*, 2.8. 1-4.

<sup>30</sup> Ovid, *Pont.* 3.161-164.

*Nec pietas ignota mea est: videt hospita terra  
in nostra sacrum Caesaris esse domo.  
Stant pariter natusque pius coniunxque sacerdos,  
numina iam facto non leviora deo.*<sup>31</sup>

Ovid has covered all his bases: he has mentioned Augustus, his priestly wife, and his pious son, all standing equally with powers not unlike those of the gods. Ovid's attentions to the imperial family were certainly meant to hasten his recall to Rome, but they also speak of a type of devotion that was not unusual in the Empire. Whether the divine powers of the imperial family were accepted or not, there was an accepted practice of honoring them as *numina* within the home. By that point in history, imperial images could be mass produced in cheap materials and symbols could be found everywhere: from jewelry to utensils, from wall and ceilings to roof tiles.<sup>32</sup> Flory interprets this attention to the family as the starting point for the deification of women. It was not the fact that Drusilla had been deified before Livia that "broke down reserve," but rather it was the concept of the imperial family having a divine nature.<sup>33</sup>

Ovid does pay particular attention to Livia, perhaps hoping to induce her to speak to Augustus on his behalf. In the aforementioned poem to his wife, Ovid compares Livia's beauty with the beauty of Venus (*Veneris formam*) and Livia's character with that of Juno's (*mores Iunonis*).<sup>34</sup> The poet's attention to Livia does not begin and end with flattery, however. In the *Fasti*, he surmises that the deification of Livia will follow close upon the heels of her husband's:

*et penes Augustos patriae tutela manebit:*

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<sup>31</sup> Ovid, *Pont.* 4.9.105-108.

<sup>32</sup> Zanker (1988) 266.

<sup>33</sup> Flory, (1995) 134.

<sup>34</sup> Ovid, *Pont.* 3.1.117.

*hanc fas imperii frena tenere domum.  
inde nepos natusque dei, licet ipse recuset,  
pondera caelesti mente paterna feret,  
utque ego perpetuis olim sacrabor in aris,  
sic Augusta novum Iulia numen erit.*<sup>35</sup>

After describing the good that Augustus has done, and the continued good the son and grandson of Augustus will do, Ovid mentions Livia's imminent *numen*. Some kind of *numen* was appropriate for Livia, since she was the *sacerdos divi Augusti*, and was therefore an important mediator between the god and his people.<sup>36</sup> This is the most often quoted evidence that Augustus wished Livia to be deified.<sup>37</sup>

Valerius Maximus also pays close attention to the connections between Livia and the divine. In the beginning of book 6, he says that Pudicitia rests among the Augustan household gods and in Julia's most holy bed: *tu Palatii columen augustos penates sanctissimumque Iuliae genialem torum adsidua statione celebras.*<sup>38</sup> The reference to Julia seems puzzling, since, by the reign of Tiberius, when Valerius wrote, Augustus' daughter had already been exiled for her sexual promiscuity. Most likely, the Julia here is Julia Augusta, or Livia. Like Ovid, Valerius praises her and the imperial family. Where Ovid was willing to compare Livia directly to Juno and Venus, Valerius attributes to her the quality of *pudicitia*. In Valerius' time it was common to offer dedications to the *iuno* of Livia, as will be discussed below, and it was quite common to associate Livia

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<sup>35</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, 1.531-536.

<sup>36</sup> Flory (1995) 131.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Valerius Maximus, 6.1.*init.*

with the various virtues promoted by the state. It seems that Valerius, like Ovid, was anticipating the deification of Livia.<sup>39</sup>

Livia's grandson Claudius finally deified her in 41 A.D. Claudius, since he lived with Livia when he was a boy,<sup>40</sup> finally brought to fruition the desires of the Senate and the Roman people. Claudius, however, also had something to gain from this benefaction: first of all, it indicated to the people that he had a sense of *pietas* in giving honor to his ancestor, and secondly, it created a divine relationship for Claudius, who was not directly related to the *divus* Augustus.<sup>41</sup> In her honor Claudius held equestrian games, and set up a statue of her in the temple of Augustus. He also gave the charge of sacrificing to her to the Vestal Virgins, and declared that women taking oaths should swear by her name:

ταῖς τε γυναιξῶν ὄρχον τῆ ἰ νομα αὐτῆς ποιεῖσθαι χελεῦσας.<sup>42</sup>

### 1.3 Numismatic and Sculptural Evidence of the Worship of Livia Drusilla

There are not many coins bearing Livia's portrait. Before she received the honor, few women appeared on coins. Augustus and Tiberius, as was their policy with honors regarding Livia, were sparing in their use of her image or name on coins during their reign. No recognizable image of Livia appeared on coins until A.D. 22 to 23, by Augustus' order.<sup>43</sup> A female image did appear on the coinage of Augustus and Tiberius as *Pax*, but it is not clear whether this was intended to be Livia.<sup>44</sup> She appeared on

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<sup>39</sup> Mueller (2002) 43.

<sup>40</sup> Dio Cassius, 60.2.

<sup>41</sup> Wood (1999) 138.

<sup>42</sup> Dio Cassius, 60.5.

<sup>43</sup> Giacosa (1970) 23.

<sup>44</sup> Wood (1999) 104.

*dupondii* connected to abstracts the imperial family attributed to itself, such as *Pietas*, *Iustitia*, and *Salus*. In A.D. 22 the first coin to appear with Livia's name showed a *carpentum* drawn by two mules, with the legend S.P.Q.R. IULIAE AUGUSTAE.<sup>45</sup> Other coins with identifiable images of Livia either connect her to an abstract divinity or to her husband or son. On one coin, a bust of Livia adorns the obverse with the legend SALUS AUGUSTA, with SC in the field of the reverse and a legend of Tiberius.<sup>46</sup> A similar coin from A.D. 22 to 23 has the legend IUSTITIA on the obverse with a diademed bust of Livia.<sup>47</sup> One *dupondius* showed the bust of Augustus on the obverse and a seated Livia on the reverse.<sup>48</sup> The coins from the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius bearing Livia's likeness are a hesitant beginning of using her image in imperial art. Coins were widely distributed and would be seen by a great amount of people of diverse age, gender, and social standing. By identifying Livia with abstract divinities, Augustus and Tiberius accomplished two things: first they endowed Livia with the attributes of these divinities, setting her up as a model Roman matron, and secondly, they attributed, in a small way, perhaps, some kind of *numen* to Livia. This notion was not completely unfounded: Ovid's went into exile in A.D. 8 and was already attributing some divine power to Livia with the rest of the imperial family.<sup>49</sup> By A.D. 22, it is possible that there was some expectancy of divine honors for Livia.

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<sup>45</sup> Grether (1946) 237.

<sup>46</sup> Giacosa #4.

<sup>47</sup> Giacosa #5.

<sup>48</sup> Carson #37.

<sup>49</sup> It is still unclear whether Ovid began the *Fasti* before or after he was exiled. At any rate, the suggestion that Livia would become a *novum numen* was made well before her image appeared on imperial coinage.

Livia's image appeared on coins in the years after her deification. Galba used the image of Livia on his coinage. On one *aureus* from A.D. 68 or 69, the obverse shows the bust of Galba and the reverse show a standing Livia.<sup>50</sup> A silver *denarius* of A.D. 68 or 69 shows the bust of Galba on the obverse and Livia on the reverse, holding a *patera* and a scepter, with the legend DIVA AUGUSTA.<sup>51</sup> Under Titus, the coins *Iustitia* and *Pietas* coins of the Augustan period were revived as well.<sup>52</sup> By the reigns of Galba and the Flavian emperors, it was common for women to appear on coins. Livia's image appeared on them because her cult was still worshipped.<sup>53</sup> For the later emperors, it was a chance to honor the memory of a woman who had done much for Rome. It was not so much intended for worship, but rather a posthumous honor.

Recognizable images of Livia did not appear in sculpture until her deification. Then her images were carefully distributed by the imperial family, and unofficial images were also erected in the provinces, a practice which attests to the indefinite nature of imperial art, as well as to the practice of "spontaneous worship" sanctioned beyond the reach of Rome. In Rome, Tiberius fought to keep the perception of his mother as divine under control. During the lifetime of her husband and son, the only association of Livia with the divine in imperial-sanctioned art was found on the Ara Pacis, and some

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<sup>50</sup> Carson #70.

<sup>51</sup> Herbert #441. Grether suggests Galba ordered this to enhance his claim to power, but I am more of the mind that he wished to dedicate this honor to her memory because of the money she bequeathed him in her will.

<sup>52</sup> Grether (1946) 251.

<sup>53</sup> Grether (1946) 251. Grether states that the association of *diva* Augusta with *divus* Augustus allowed Livia's cult to endure longer than many of the cults to *divae* which followed. The emperors were eager to honor Augustus' memory, and therefore Livia's, since she was connected to his divinity from the beginning as his priestess. In the case of Galba, however, I feel that he was showing the proper measure of *pietas* by honoring his patroness. Though Tiberius had stalled the execution of the will, the amount of money left to Galba was significant and no doubt helped him tremendously in his military campaigns.

sanctioned provincial works.<sup>54</sup> Even with their concerns, the art of the Ara Pacis and statues of the period portray Livia in every respect as a goddess of plenty and fertility or as a priestess.<sup>55</sup> Even under Caligula, Livia appeared to have a certain amount of favor. One sculptural group from Velleia shows Livia as larger and more prominent than the other women of the group.<sup>56</sup> Under Claudius, it was not difficult for artists to liken Livia to goddesses, since images of her even before her deification showed her with the attributes of Ceres,<sup>57</sup> Cybele<sup>58</sup> and Venus Genetrix.<sup>59</sup> Later images included such divine indicators as diadems, *infulae*, and even *spicea*.<sup>60</sup>

Even before her deification, Livia was equated with the divine. One example in particular proves this point: the statue of *Ceres Augusta* in Leptis Magna. The cult image was found in a small temple, and it was dedicated by a Roman official named Rubellius Blandus and a wealthy woman named Suphunibal. The statue was most likely dedicated after her death, but pre-dates her deification by 6-7 years.<sup>61</sup> Added to the following evidence of inscriptions, it seems clear that the provinces were willing to honor Livia as a goddess even before her deification. This “spontaneous worship,” worship of a cult not

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<sup>54</sup> Wood (1999) 140.

<sup>55</sup> Grether (1946) 245.

<sup>56</sup> Wood (1999) 125.

<sup>57</sup> Grether (1946) 243-244. Paris cameo, Florentine sardonyx, cameo in the British museum.

<sup>58</sup> Grether (1946) 243. A sardonyx in the Vienna museum showing her seated, holding a tympanum with a lion, wearing the crown of Cybele and holding a sheaf of poppies.

<sup>59</sup> Wood (1999) 127.

<sup>60</sup> Wood (1999) 127, 135.

<sup>61</sup> Wood (1999) 112.

brought in by the imperial government, indicates a popular belief in Livia's divinity, or at least a popular belief that she deserved divine honors.

#### 1.4 Inscriptional Evidence of the Worship of Livia Drusilla

There is no possible way to catalogue inscriptions as sincere or exploitative in a definite way. We can only rely on the words of the inscriptions to interpret the purpose of a dedication or ritual or the intent of the dedicator. The inscriptions of the *Acta* of the Arval Brethren track the official attitude towards Livia's divinity from the rule of Augustus until the rule of Vitellius. As a sodality dedicated almost entirely to the worship in Rome of the Imperial cult and as a group of politically entrenched men appointed to the sodality, the feelings of belief among the celebrants is not worth discussing. The rituals of the Arval Brethren were not celebrated to indicate their own personal belief but to indicate to the public that the imperial cult was not neglected by rulers and to demonstrate the *pietas* of the emperor.

The Arval Brethren did offer prayers to Livia before her consecration during the reign of Claudius. In A.D. 38, three years before Livia's deification, on the Capitoline the Arval Brethren sacrificed an ox to Capitoline Jove for Livia's birthday.<sup>62</sup> They offered prayers on her birthday for two years before her death.<sup>63</sup> Her birthday was also celebrated in other parts of Italy: an inscription from the Forum Clodii in A.D. 18 lists her birthday among the *fasti*.<sup>64</sup> The sacrificing of the Arval Brethren was state-sactioned, but the sacrifice for Livia's birthday, just like a sacrifice for Augustus' or Tiberius, honored her popularity and power.

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<sup>62</sup> CIL 6.2028.

<sup>63</sup> Flory (1995) 128.

<sup>64</sup> CIL 11. 3303 in Grether (1946) 238.

After Livia's deification under Claudius, the Arval Brethren began to sacrifice to her instead of for her. On Livia's consecration, they offered an ox to the *divus* Augustus and a cow to the *diva* Augusta.<sup>65</sup> In the following years of Claudius' reign, it became customary to include sacrifices to the *divus* Augustus and the *diva* Augusta together among the other usual sacrifices to the Capitoline Triad. The sacrifices took place in various places, including the temple of Concordia,<sup>66</sup> the Palatine,<sup>67</sup> the new temple of the *divus* Augustus,<sup>68</sup> and the Capitoline.<sup>69</sup> In every instance, a cow was sacrificed to *diva* Augusta, always accompanied by an ox sacrificed to the *divus* Augustus.

The worship of Livia did not end with the death of Claudius. Nero continued to show devotion to Augustus and Livia. In A.D.58 the Arval Brethren sacrificed two oxen to *divus* Augustus, two cows to *diva* Augusta, and two oxen to *divus* Claudius in the new temple. Prayers and sacrifices were made on the same day in the Capitol for the safety of Nero and Octavia, and sacrifices were made to the Capitoline Triad and *Salus* in the Capitol as well.<sup>70</sup> The records of the Arval Brethren in the reign of Nero mention the specific reason for prayer and sacrifice, Nero's attempts to demonstrate his *pietas*. In A.D. 58 in October, sacrifices were made to the *divus* Augustus, the *diva* Augusta, and the *divus* Claudius because of the *imperium Neronis*.<sup>71</sup> In January A.D. 59 sacrifices of two animals apiece were made to *divus* Augustus, *diva* Augusta, and *divus* Claudius *pro*

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<sup>65</sup> *CIL* 6.2032.

<sup>66</sup> *CIL* 6. 2033.

<sup>67</sup> *Antica* 19.

<sup>68</sup> *Antica* 20.

<sup>69</sup> *CIL* 6.2038, *Antica* 25.

<sup>70</sup> *CIL* 6.2040, *Antica* 26.

<sup>71</sup> *CIL* 6.2041, *Antica* 27.

*salute Neronis Claudii ... et Octaviae coniugis eius* in the new temple.<sup>72</sup> A similar sacrifice was made for the safety of Nero and Octavia around A.D. 61 in January, again of two animals apiece to the *divus* Augustus, *diva* Augusta, and *divus* Claudius.<sup>73</sup>

A.D. 63 brought changes in the sacrifices and prayers of the Arval Brethren, due to two new women in Nero's life: his new wife, Poppaea, and their daughter, Claudia. These women will be discussed below. Livia continued to be worshiped in conjunction with Augustus and Claudius. In 63 A.D., the year of Claudia's birth and death, the Arval Brethren sacrificed in the Capitol *ob imperium Neronis*. Sacrifices were made to the Capitoline Triad and *Felicitas*, and in the new temple sacrifices were made to the *divus* Augustus, the *diva* Augusta, *divus* Claudius, *diva* Claudia, and *diva* Poppaea.<sup>74</sup> In A.D. 66 sacrifices were again made on the Capitol to include the *divus* Augustus, *diva* Augusta, *divus* Claudius, *diva* Claudia, and *diva* Poppaea, but also the *genius* of Nero. The same year saw sacrifices made to the same deities *ob laurum imperatoris Neronis* and *ob Augustalia*.<sup>75</sup>

The worship of Livia continued even into the reign of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Under each emperor, sacrifices were made to *divus* Augustus, *diva* Augusta, and *divus* Claudius, as was customary in the early reign of Nero.<sup>76</sup> The sacrifices for Otho were made *ob vota nuncupata pro salute imperatoris*, and those of Vitellius were made *pro*

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *CIL* 6.2048, *Antica* 33.

<sup>74</sup> *CIL* 6. 2043, *Antica* 29, II.

<sup>75</sup> *CIL* 6.2044.

<sup>76</sup> *CIL* 6.2051, *Antica* 40.

*salute et reditu (Vitelli) Germanici imperatoris*. Galba owed a particular debt of gratitude to Livia, since she left him a large amount of money in her will.

Though Augustus and Tiberius were carefully prohibiting Livia from extravagant honors, they could not control the inclinations and beliefs of their provincial subjects. Dedications were made to Livia across the Empire. The worship of Livia in the Greek East follows the honors accorded the living emperors of the time. At Athens Livia and Julia, Augustus' daughter, shared a priestess and a temple with Hestia.<sup>77</sup> At Thasos, the women were honored as Εὐεργῆται, and Livia was honored as Θεὸς Εὐεργῆτις.<sup>78</sup> Livia was also called Θεὸς Λιβῆ on coins from Clazomenae and Methymna.<sup>79</sup> These honors were all accorded to her before her official deification as was the Greek custom of honoring the emperor and empress as divine even in their lifetimes. This worship was not sanctioned by the Roman government, but rather was instituted by the people of the provinces themselves.

A small marble tablet from the Forum Clodii lists a wide variety of honors done for the imperial family in the consulships of Tiberius Caesar and Germanicus Caesar, well before Livia's deification. The dedications were decreed by the *duoviri* (*Cn. Acceio Cn. f. Arnensis Rufo Lutatio, T. Petillio P. f. Quirina II viris decreta*) of the province and covered many benefactions. Most notable is the money that the *duoviri* spend to honor the Imperial cult: *aram numini Augusto pecunia nostra faciendam curavimus; ludos ex idibus Augustis diebus sex pecunia nostra faciendos curavimus*. Livia's birthday appears next on the list: *natali Augustae mulsum et crustum (sic) mulieribus vicinis ad bonam*

<sup>77</sup> *CIA* 3, 316 in Grether (1946) 230.

<sup>78</sup> *I.G.* 12, 7 in Grether (1946) 231.

<sup>79</sup> Grether (1946) 232.

*deam pecunia nostra dedimus; item dedicatione statuarum Caesarum et Augustae mulsum et crustla (sic) pecunia nostra decurionibus et populo dedimus, perpetuoque eius die dedicationis daturos nos testati sumus.*<sup>80</sup> The *duoviri* certainly have demonstrated their piety, and they also had the money to inscribe their *pietas* on a stone, which also recorded the amounts of their own money they spent on the rituals and in giving opportunities of worship to the *decuriones* and the people. Livia's birthday was one more occasion for them to display their *pietas* in an ostentatious manner. An inscription from El-Lehs in Africa offers a *sacrum* to the *iuno* of Livia. The reason is not inscribed, only: *L Passieno Rufo Imperatore Africam obtinente Cn Cornelius Cn F Cor Rufus et Maria C F Galla Cn conservati vota L M solvont.*<sup>81</sup> It seems as though the dedicators were "saved" from something when Rufus took command of Africa, and therefore they fulfilled the vows they promised. This *sacrum* was dedicated before Livia was deified, and indicates again that her spirit was petitioned for help. Whether the intention of the dedicators was for Livia herself, as a mortal, to actually put Rufus into power or whether the dedicators intended her spirit to move someone into action, it is not clear. But the dedication goes to her divine spirit, her *iuno*, not the woman herself.

There are some inscriptions dedicated by freed slaves. One inscription in Rome was dedicated to the household gods of the imperial family and to *diva* Augusta by the freedman Bathyllus *quod est in palatium immunis et honoratus.*<sup>82</sup> In another inscription, Gelos, a freedman from Cisalpine Gaul dedicated an inscription to Julia, Augustus' daughter and to *diva* Augusta, since it was through her will that he become free (*Iuliae*

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<sup>80</sup> *CIL* 11.3303.

<sup>81</sup> *CIL* 8.16456.

<sup>82</sup> *CIL* 6.4222.

*divai Augustae liberate matri ex testamento fieri iussit*).<sup>83</sup> There is no mention of money, since both men probably have little, and there is not mention of sacrifices. These are simply inscriptions of thanks from men who have no political power or money to display the extent of their *pietas*.

There are dedications of unidentified *sacra* all over the Empire, dedications which only supply the name of the dedicator and the name of the dedicatee. These most likely were the bases of statues or stood near a monument. These are useful in that they can show the extent of Livia's worship throughout the Empire. M. Livius erected a monument to her in Urbini,<sup>84</sup> and L Mammius Maximus, who probably lived under Claudius, set up some monument to her in Herculaneum.<sup>85</sup> Another inscription from Falerio was dedicated to *genio Augusti et Ti. Caesaris iunoni Liviae*.<sup>86</sup>

The dedications of men and women throughout the Empire are more powerful testimonies to the worship of Livia: they were *flamines*, *flaminicae*, and *sacerdotes* of her cults. Julia was the *sacerdos* in Baetica in Further Spain,<sup>87</sup> Albinus the son of Albui was the *flamen* of *divus Augustus* and *diva Augusta* in Lusitania, a province in Iberia.<sup>88</sup> Sabina was the *flaminca* of *diva Augusta* in Albingavinum,<sup>89</sup> Paulla the daughter of

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<sup>83</sup> *AE* 1975, 0289.

<sup>84</sup> *CIL* 6.3879.

<sup>85</sup> *CIL* 10.1413.

<sup>86</sup> *CIL* 11.3076.

<sup>87</sup> *CIL* 2.1571.

<sup>88</sup> *CIL* 2.473.

<sup>89</sup> *CIL* 5.7788.

Cantia was the *flaminica* of *diva* Augusta in Ferrandus.<sup>90</sup> Plaria was the *sacerdos* of Livia's cult in Ostia,<sup>91</sup> and Curtilia held the same office in Suasa.<sup>92</sup> Ria served as *flaminica* of *diva* Augusta in Cirta, in Algeria,<sup>93</sup> a dedication was made to Septicia Marcellina, the *sacerdos* of *diva* Augusta by the decree of the local military officers,<sup>94</sup> and finally Julia was the *sacerdos* of *diva* Augusta in Torreparedones.<sup>95</sup> If these inscriptions prove anything, it is that Livia was worshipped throughout the Empire and that her cults had priestesses to celebrate the rituals. Most of the inscriptions do not indicate the reason for the dedication, and the social status of the priests and priestesses is not clear, and so there are few conclusions about intent or belief to be made here.

### 1.5 Conclusions

Livia was, in reality, the first *diva* of Rome. Through the powers given to her by her husband, she was able to distribute a vast amount of wealth in Rome to a variety of causes, and was able to exert considerable influence on political matters. She was rewarded for her service to the state and her support of her husband with honors which up to that point had never been conferred to a woman. The conferral of divine honors upon her was delayed because of the concerns of Augustus and Tiberius, but her divine power seemed to be accepted by some people of Rome. Her deification and the worship of her cult set a standard for the worship of *divae* in the coming generations. Her cult was the

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<sup>90</sup> *CIL* 9.1155.

<sup>91</sup> *CIL* 14.399.

<sup>92</sup> *CIL* 11.6172.

<sup>93</sup> *CIL* 8.19492, *CIL* 8.6987.

<sup>94</sup> *IL* (Vercel) 93.

<sup>95</sup> *CIL* 2.5421.

recipient of both heartfelt and insincere offerings, and her image became the embodiment of feminine power. Livia begins this study because she epitomizes the *diva* of the Roman Empire. The circumstances of deification, the receptions of the people, and the cult practices of the other *divae* will necessarily be compared and contrasted to Livia's.

## CHAPTER 2 THE JULIO-CLAUDIANS

### 2.1 Introduction

Though Julia Drusilla was the first deified Roman women, Livia was and will always be the model of merited consecration. Though three other women of the Julio-Claudian family were deified, the circumstances of their consecration and the worship of their cults are markedly different from Livia's. The most important difference between Livia and the other Julian-Claudian women, and indeed with all other deified Roman women, is the belief or assumption of the Roman people that Livia deserved the honors she was awarded. Though Julia Drusilla, Poppaea Sabina, and her daughter Claudia were highly visible to Roman through public art, they did not live long enough nor did they hold positions of power long enough to be of any direct importance to the public. Livia lived to 86 – Drusilla died around the age of 22, Poppaea was perhaps in her 30s, and Claudia was four months old. They were practically unknown to the Roman people except as symbols of the imperial family. Thus their consecrations and their cult worship took on a different tone from Livia's, while the system of worship remained the same. The state-sanctioned worship of the Arval Brethren continued to worship the new *divae* as they did Livia, and the same honors were accorded to the empresses as had always been the custom in the East, but there appear to be more instances in the West of exploiting the cult of the Julio-Claudian *divae* than there was for Livia. This is due to the fact that the public in general did not seem to believe that these women merited consecration, and thus viewed their cults as opportunities for social advancement.

## 2.2 Julia Drusilla

### 2.2.1 Literary Evidence of the Worship of Julia Drusilla

Julia Drusilla was one of three daughters of Germanicus and Agrippina the Elder, the others being Agrippina the Younger and Julia Livilla. Her brother, Caligula, succeeded Tiberius as ruler. Caligula made public his sentiment that his sisters should play a visible part of his reign by means of public decrees. He ordered that all sacred oaths should include his sisters: *neque me liberosque meos cariores habebam quam Gaium habeo et sorores eius*. He issued a similar decree for the consuls: *quod bonum felixque sit C. Caesaris sororibusque eius*.<sup>1</sup> In A.D. 37 or 38 a silver *sestertius* was minted with the head of Caligula on the obverse and his three sisters on the reverse, with Agrippina as *Securitas*, Drusilla as *Concordia*, and Julia as *Fortuna*.<sup>2</sup> Caligula, as demonstrated by his actions, initially promoted a family-based image for the imperial household. He honored his mother and sisters and promoted their images in coin and art – at least for awhile.

Caligula's sisters had the ability to influence Caligula, but had no real hopes of power,<sup>3</sup> until he decided to make Drusilla the heir of the Empire. Caligula favored Drusilla above his other sisters. Suetonius tells us that he took her back from her husband Lucius Cassius Longinus and kept her as his own wife,<sup>4</sup> but Dio Cassius reports she was married to Marcus Lepidus, a friend of Caligula's.<sup>5</sup> Wood suggests that Caligula

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<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 15.

<sup>2</sup> Sutherland, #98.

<sup>3</sup> Wood (1995) 458.

<sup>4</sup> Suet, *Calig.* 24.

<sup>5</sup> Dio Cassius, 59.11.1.

dissolved Drusilla's marriage to Longinus to force her to marry Lepidus,<sup>6</sup> someone he felt he could control. Wood suggests that this move was calculated and not the result of a depraved desire: Caligula was intent on making Drusilla the embodiment of Julian fertility. He wanted her to produce an heir to the Empire. When Caligula fell ill in A.D. 37, he intended to bequeath the entire Empire to her and her heir.<sup>7</sup> Lepidus, therefore, would become emperor, and Drusilla would fulfill her duty to continue the Julian bloodline. Her real power was in her ability to reproduce.<sup>8</sup>

However, Caligula's plans were thwarted when Drusilla died suddenly at a young age. Upon her death, Caligula deified her and ordered all of Rome to mourn her death. Suetonius writes that he imposed public mourning by making it an offense to laugh, wash, or have dinner with your parents, wife, or children.<sup>9</sup> The worship of the *diva* Drusilla depended on the whim of Caligula, a private mourning for a dead relative made public.<sup>10</sup> Dio Cassius writes that Caligula changed her name to *Panthea*, ordered a golden effigy to be set up in the Senate House, a statue built for the temple of Venus in Rome, and dedicated twenty priests of men and women to her. There was also a festival in Rome on her birthday, on which the Senate and the knights held a banquet.<sup>11</sup> There were games for the "New Aphrodite Drusilla" throughout the Empire.<sup>12</sup> Dio Cassius describes dramatic affairs Caligula produced for Drusilla's worship. He celebrated

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<sup>6</sup> Wood (1995) 459.

<sup>7</sup> Wood (1999) 212.

<sup>8</sup> Wood (1995) 459.

<sup>9</sup> Suet, *Calig.*, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Wood (1995) 482.

<sup>11</sup> Dio Cassius, 59.11.

<sup>12</sup> *IGRR* 4, no. 145, in Lewis and Reinhold (1990) 32.

Drusilla's birthday after her death with a two-day festival. He brought her statue into the Circus on a car drawn by two elephants, and then proceeded to produce a spectacle that involved the deaths of bears and Libyan animals, as well as a *pancratium* competition.<sup>13</sup> The Senate then stated that Drusilla's birthday and Tiberius' birthday would be celebrated in the same manner as Augustus'. Actors even dedicated images of Gaius and Drusilla to the gods.<sup>14</sup> He later named his daughter by Caesonia Drusilla, and put her into the lap of the Jupiter on the Capitoline to show her divine favor.<sup>15</sup> By this point, Caligula's own delusions of divinity were becoming manifest.

Caligula's motives of deification may have been to repair what Wood calls a "dynastic disaster."<sup>16</sup> Because Drusilla could not fulfill her purported role as fertile bearer of Julian heirs, she could become instead a kind of patron goddess for the imperial family.<sup>17</sup> By A.D. 39, a year after Drusilla's worship, Caligula's system of family-based propaganda fell apart. He convicted Lepidus with adultery with his sisters and treasonous conspiracy and executed him, and he exiled his sisters from Rome.<sup>18</sup> The worship of *diva* Drusilla ended with Caligula's assassination.

### 2.2.2 Numismatic and Sculptural Evidence of Worship of Julia Drusilla

Though it was only Drusilla who was deified, a large amount of the images of the imperial family disseminated throughout the Empire were group portraits of the sisters.

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<sup>13</sup> Dio Cassius, 59.13.

<sup>14</sup> Dio Cassius, 59.13.

<sup>15</sup> Dio Cassius, 59.28.

<sup>16</sup> Wood (1995) 459.

<sup>17</sup> Wood (1995) 460.

<sup>18</sup> Dio Cassius, 59.22.

Drusilla did enjoy some personal attention, through individual images and through divine attributes on her person to mark her divinity. There was a Milesian coin with the legend ΘΕΑ ΔΡΟΥΣΙΑΛΛΑ, but it's possible that this may have been minted before her deification.<sup>19</sup> Another coin from Apamea pays homage to both the imperial family and to *diva* Drusilla. The obverse is a portrait of Agrippina Maior, and the reverse depicts her three daughters. Drusilla is a bit more pronounced in this portrait, with DIVA inscribed below her portrait and a beaded headband on her head.<sup>20</sup> There were also statues of the sisters throughout the Empire during their lifetime, and Drusilla appeared in sculptural groups with her sisters even after her consecration.<sup>21</sup> Drusilla is usually marked as divine by a particular headband, an *infula*.<sup>22</sup> Because the images of the sisters on extant coins do not have distinct features, it is difficult to assess which statues may be Drusilla.

### 2.2.3 Inscriptional Evidence of the Worship of Julia Drusilla

There is evidence of sanctioned worship of *diva Drusilla*. In A.D. 38 the Arval Brethren gathered near the kalends of October in the new temple of the Divine Augustus to sacrifice on the occasion of the consecration (*ob consecrationem divae Drusillae*) of Drusilla.<sup>23</sup> The tablet shows other references to *divae Drusillae*. In A.D. 40, 2 years after Drusilla's death, the Arval Brethren gathered on the Capitoline in June to sacrifice to Jove, Juno, and Minerva *ob natalem divae Drusillae*.<sup>24</sup> At the Capitoline, a cow was

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<sup>19</sup> Wood (1995) 462.

<sup>20</sup> Wood (1995) 463.

<sup>21</sup> Wood (1995) 465.

<sup>22</sup> See Wood (1995) 478 for a description of the *infula* and its connotations.

<sup>23</sup> *CIL* 6.2028, *Antica* 12 c.

<sup>24</sup> *CIL* 6.2030, *Antica* 14.

sacrificed to *divae Drusillae sorori Germanici Augusti*, along with the abstracts important to the Julio-Claudians: *Salus publica* and *Felicitas*.<sup>25</sup> This is the only inscription in which indicates an actual sacrifice to *diva* Drusilla. The others are not sacrifices made to her, but sacrifices made to other deities on her behalf.

Beyond the prayers of the Arval Brethren, there were also *sacra* dedicated to Drusilla throughout the Empire. One inscription in particular indicates how Drusilla's cult may be used to honor another member of her family. Tiberius, before Drusilla's deification, dedicated a *sacrum* both to her and her father Germanicus: *Iuliae Drusillae German Caesar F. Tiberius parenti numinis honore delato posuit*.<sup>26</sup> It was not Drusilla who was important, but Germanicus, her famous father. Other inscriptions note that a *sacrum* was dedicated to *diva* Drusilla, *sorori C. Caesaris Augusti Germanici*, one in Caere, and one *divae Drusillae Germanici Caesaris f.* in Veleia.<sup>27</sup> These inscriptions refer to the *diva* as the daughter of a famous Roman hero and the sister of the emperor. They are honored through her honor – it is not Drusilla alone on whom her deification reflects.

The worship of Drusilla also gave a number of individuals the opportunity to inscribe their names, their wealth, and their political positions on stone. C. Rubellius Blandus, a quaestor under Augustus, dedicated some sacred object (only a marble tablet survives) to Drusilla which stood in Tibur. A flock of abbreviations follow his name: TR, PL, PR COS, PRO COS, PONTIF.<sup>28</sup> Blandus was obviously an important man in

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<sup>25</sup> *CIL*.6.32345.

<sup>26</sup> *CIL* 12.1026.

<sup>27</sup> *CIL* 11.3598, *CIL* 11.1168.

<sup>28</sup> *CIL* 14.3576.

Tibur, and he used his dedication to Drusilla to reinforce that. At Avaricum Bithurigum C. Agileius, a man with a flock of initials after his name (VIRAVGCCRDSPD) offered a sacrum to *divae* Drusilla and to Minerva *pro salute Caesarum*.<sup>29</sup> Here we see Drusilla petitioned as the patron goddess Caligula intended her to be, but the image that lingers in the mind, the last thing read, was the string of initials after Agileius' name, telling all who pass of his importance. An inscription from Alpes Cottiae suggests that Drusilla had a cult, since her *flaminica*, Secunda, gave a fishpond (*piscinam*) to her municipality.<sup>30</sup> This inscription relates that Drusilla did in actuality have cults around the Empire with priestesses, and also indicates that these priestesses could be relatively wealthy. This is a common characteristic of the priestesses of the various *divae* around the Empire, which will be discussed below.

Finally, a *fasti* inscription from Ostia indicates that the people there worshipped Drusilla, since they celebrated her death: *III Idus Iun. Drusilla excessit*.<sup>31</sup> The celebration of dates of births and deaths of members of the imperial family was not uncommon, as the army carried calendars of births and deaths with them and various cities had their own calendars of *fasti* posted in public places.

Since there are not many extant examples of the worship of *diva* Drusilla, it is difficult to assess her importance in the Empire. We do know that the Arval Brethren do not mention her again after Caligula's death, and that she is not worshipped in conjunction with any other members of the imperial family. It seems likely that all vestiges of cult worship of *diva* Drusilla ended with Caligula. In the *Apocolocyntosis*,

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<sup>29</sup> *CIL* 13.1194.

<sup>30</sup> *CIL* 5.7345.

<sup>31</sup> *CIL* 14.4535.

written during Nero's reign, the man who supposedly "witnessed" Drusilla's apotheosis at her funeral is ridiculed by Seneca. In trying to find a way to legitimize Claudius' it is decided that his apotheosis must be witnessed: *Tamen si necesse fuerit auctorem producere, quaerito ab eo qui Drusillam euntem in caelum vidit: idem Claudium vidisse se dicet iter facientem 'non passibus aequis.'*<sup>32</sup> The whole situation is made light of, and the man who witnessed Drusilla's apotheosis was asked to repeat his services. This is a good indication of how Seneca felt about deification in general, but also indicates that Drusilla was no longer revered by the time he wrote.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.3 Sabina Poppaea and Claudia

### 2.3.1 Literary Evidence of the Worship of Poppaea and Claudia

Nero, as mentioned above, deified his second wife Poppaea and their daughter Claudia. Claudia only lived to be four months old, and Poppaea was actually deified in 63, two years before her death by a swift kick from Nero in 65. Nero's enforcement of public rejoicing and mourning to suit his own personal desires were reminiscent of Caligula's extravagancies after Drusilla's death. His relationship with Poppaea was not popular, and she was not well-liked by the senate or the people. The people's reaction to Nero's divorce of Octavia and marriage to Poppaea was violent and emphatic: *effigies Poppaeae prorunt, Octaviae imagines gustant umeris, spargunt floribus foroque ac templis stabunt.*<sup>34</sup> Though unpopular, Poppaea's influence over her impressionable husband was considerable. Dio Cassius writes that many were critical of Octavia because

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<sup>32</sup> Seneca, *Apoc.* 1.

<sup>33</sup> Wood (1995) 465 n. 44.

<sup>34</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 14.61.

of her “toadying” to Poppaea.<sup>35</sup> Her greatest achievement, however, was the birth of Claudia. The Senate commended her womb to the gods and offered public prayers upon Claudia’s birth.<sup>36</sup> They also dedicated a temple to fertility, a competition was ordered after the example of the Actian rites, and golden statues of the Fortunes were placed on the throne of Jupiter Capitoline.<sup>37</sup> Circus games were then held at Bouvillae for the Julian family, and Antium for the Claudian and Domitian families.<sup>38</sup> Claudia died at four months, and Nero was devastated. He plunged the country into a national state of mourning, as Caligula had for Drusilla, and deified his daughter, according her a divine couch, temple, and priest.<sup>39</sup> Nero killed Poppaea not long after, though it is unclear whether or not it was intentional. Tacitus states that Nero wanted children and was very open in his love of Poppaea,<sup>40</sup> and Dio Cassius simply states that Nero’s intention was unclear. Poppaea, according to Tacitus, was not cremated in the Roman custom, but was embalmed and taken into the tomb of the Julians. Nero himself praised her from the Rostra.<sup>41</sup> However, he was not present when the *deum honores* were voted to Poppaea by the Senate.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Dio Cassius, 62.13.

<sup>36</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.23.

<sup>37</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.23.

<sup>38</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 15.23.

<sup>39</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 16.6.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 16.21.

### 2.3.2 Numismatic Evidence of Worship of Poppaea and Claudia

The only image of Poppaea in official Roman art comes from coins of the official Roman mint. Other images appear on coins throughout the Empire, most notably from the East. One Alexandrian coin has a picture of Poppaea under the legend ΠΟΠΠΑΙΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗ, meaning “Poppaea Augusta.”<sup>43</sup> Another coin, struck in a province of Asia Minor after A.D. 63 shows the bust of Nero on the obverse and the bust of Poppaea on the reverse, both with Greek legends. There are no images of *diva* Claudia on coins. There were images of Poppaea in Rome, as Tacitus relates,<sup>44</sup> but they were either made of flimsy material or she was so unpopular that none survived.

### 2.3.3 Inscriptional Evidence of Worship of Poppaea and Claudia

The Arval Brethren included Poppaea and Claudia in their sacrifices in A.D. 63 made *ob adventum Neronis Claudii Caesaris Augusti Germanici et Poppaeae Augustae et Claudiae Augustae*.<sup>45</sup> This particular sacrifice stands out, though, since, in addition to the Capitoline Triad, *Salus publica*, *Felicitas*, and *Spes*, there was a sacrifice of a cow to *iunoni Poppaeae Augustae and iunoni Claudiae Augustae*. The same fragment records sacrifices made to *divae Poppaeae* and *divae Claudiae virginis*, as Claudia is hereafter called in the prayers of the Arval Brethren. The same inscription shows sacrifices made in October *ob iberium imperatoris Neronis*. In the phrasing of the sacrifice records, Claudia and Poppaea were always grouped with Augustus, Livia, and Claudius, and they actually receive sacrifices as divinities.

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<sup>43</sup> Wood (1999) 313.

<sup>44</sup> see above.

<sup>45</sup> *CIL* 6.2043.

The records of the Arval Brethren show evidence of worship of the *divae* Claudia and Poppaea until A.D. 66, at which point it stops completely. There is extremely little inscriptional evidence of worship of *diva* Poppaea or *diva* Claudia. There were few dedications made to *diva* Poppaea, one in Rome that was possibly the base of a statue,<sup>46</sup> and two in Luna, both by L. Titinius L. F. Galeria Glaucus Lucretianus, who held many official titles at Rome (FLAM ROMAE ET AUG II VIR IV P CS L VIR EQ R CURIO PRALF FADR COS TR MILIT L LG XXII PRIMIG PRALF) among them *flamen*, patron of the colony, tribune of a legion, and praefect for the embassy of the Baliae Islands. The description of his honors alone take up half the dedication. One inscription of his was on two large marble tablets dedicated to *diva* Poppaea Augusta and Emperor Nero Caesar,<sup>47</sup> and the other was a smaller marble tablet that may have added *divae Claudiae Neronis Augusti filiae virgini* at a later date.<sup>48</sup> His dedications were not about the *divae* so much as his own accomplishments. Dedicating a *sacrum* to a beloved *diva* of the emperor was a way to ensure your name would be engraved into stone forever. Though the names of Poppaea and Nero were on the tablets, it is clear that the person being honored was L. Titinius. There is no inscriptional evidence of either Claudia or Poppaea having any priests or priestesses dedicated to their cult.

## 2.4 Conclusions

Livia Drusilla exercised considerable power for the duration of her life as an empress and an empress-mother. Her prestige was gained through her own merit; that Augustus trusted her and asked her advice certainly earned her respect among powerful

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<sup>46</sup> *CIL* 6.40419.

<sup>47</sup> *CIL* 11.1331.

<sup>48</sup> *CIL* 11.6955.

Romans, but her patronage and visibility as an inspiring Roman matron earned her the respect of the masses. Of the other deified Julio-Claudian women, only Poppaea could claim to have the kind of influence that Livia did, though her power was based on her ability to manipulate the emperor, not on her individual influence. Drusilla and Claudia were dearly beloved to emperors, and the love of the most powerful man was forced upon the masses. The contrast between the efforts of the emperors to worship their women relates to the contrast in the longevity of the worship: the forced adoration and extravagant adulation of Drusilla, Claudia, and Poppaea, about whom the Roman people knew very little, resulted in the loss of interest in any form of worship upon the death of the emperor. Livia's record of public service, and the calculated actions of Augustus and Tiberius remained in the memories of the Roman people, and her divinity was worshipped decades after her death. People believed that the power she had in life transferred to her death. The cults of Drusilla, Poppaea and Claudia are not only less enduring, as evidenced by their lack of inscriptions, but are more susceptible to exploitation. It is clear that those who were involved with their cults or inclined to dedicate to them did so only for the public recognition it would bring them, or for the favor they felt they would gain from the emperor by remembering their beloved family members. There was a suspension of belief not noted with Livia's cult – deification for the Julio-Claudian men, with the exception of Livia, was an exercise in public mourning for private passions.

## CHAPTER 3 THE TRAJANIC FAMILY

### 3.1 Introduction

Trajan and Hadrian honored four women with deification between A.D. 98 and 138. The system of worship of these *divae* is not considerably different from that of the Julio-Claudians, yet it is clear that the role of the empress was changing. No woman in the House of Trajan or Hadrian possessed the kind of political power that Livia did, but their power was in something more abstract: the bonds of family. It was not the women themselves who were powerful in a political sense.<sup>1</sup> There was more general acceptance of women as *divae*, since dynastic rule had governed Rome for two generations before Trajan took power. There was no need to straddle a fence between republic and principate as there was for Augustus and Tiberius, and the imagery of the imperial family reflected that change. Boatwright suggests that the women of Trajan and Hadrian were more subservient than women of previous families.<sup>2</sup> There are no records of their political dealings or public works, and very little about their actual relationships with the emperor. There is also very little gossip about their sexuality, which suggests that they were very unconcerned with imperial power. Their importance was found in the image of *concordia* in the imperial family they could project to the Empire.

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<sup>1</sup> Boatwright (1991) 515.

<sup>2</sup> Boatwright (1991) 513.

There were three things Roman women needed to have any kind of say in political issues: lineage, high connections, and money.<sup>3</sup> There is little evidence that these women had any money of their own. They did not restore buildings or help needy families. There are no inscriptions thanking them for public works, or for money bequeathed upon their deaths. They simply did not demonstrate the kind of service to the state that Livia did generations ago. As for their families, the women were not Roman by birth. They came from northern Italy, France, and Spain.<sup>4</sup> They did not come from a powerful Roman family, as Livia did, nor did they have the built-in connections with the aristocratic class that Livia enjoyed. They were foreign women brought in by the foreign generals who became emperors. This may also have somewhat tied their hands.

The worship of the Trajanic women had an emphasis on family. There are many dedications throughout the Empire that bear the names of three *divae*, mother, daughter, and granddaughter. Since Trajan did not leave a son to inherit his throne, his family was immortalized through its women, not its men. Trajan's successor, Hadrian, gained his Empire through the machinations of his adopted mother, and maintained the air of family legitimacy by marrying and making Trajan's grandniece, Sabina, the empress. The women were the glue that held this dynasty together, not the men. That was their contribution to the Empire. They were the models of what a Roman woman should be at the time: possibly foreign, as the Empire marked its largest boundary under Trajan and Hadrian, and quietly supportive. Every literary reference that is not gossip is a reference to the *diva* as a good wife, mother, or sister. Each knew her place in the family.

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<sup>3</sup> Boatwright (1991) 515.

<sup>4</sup> Boatwright (1991) 518.

## 3.2 Marciana

### 3.2.1 Literary and Inscriptional Evidence of Worship of Marciana

While Trajan did not deify his wife, he did confer such honors on his sister, Marciana, in 112 A.D. Marciana is a bit of a mystery. No Roman historian mentions her; only Pliny the Younger mentions her in the *Panegyric*, but does not call her by name, only *tua soror*. Pliny praises her through Trajan, saying that she possesses his *simplicitas*, *veritas*, and *candor*.<sup>5</sup> It's possible that she was married to a senator from Viceta, but she was a widow by the time Trajan took power.<sup>6</sup> Marciana does not receive any sacrifices from the Arval Brethren, and there is no inscriptional evidence of any cult dedicated to her. There are dedications of *sacra* to Marciana throughout the Empire. One inscription found in Azuaga emphasizes Trajan's lineage: *Divae Marcianae Augustae Imp Caes Divi Nervae F. Nervae Traini Optimi Aug Germ Dacici Parthici Sorori*.<sup>7</sup> Another found in Torreparedones simply calls her the *sorori Augusti*,<sup>8</sup> and a base found in the Municipium Githense simply calls her *Divae Mariciane Augustae*.<sup>9</sup> The emphasis of the inscriptions is her relationship to Trajan – they offer no other information about the woman herself, her proposed powers as a *diva*, or even a reason for the dedication. Marciana's value is wrapped up in Trajan's ability to use her as an example for Roman matrons. One look at a particularly grand dedication made at Ancona, dated at A.D. 115 indicates who was important in the imperial family, *diva* or

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<sup>5</sup> Plin. *Pan.* 84.

<sup>6</sup> Boatwright (1991) 517.

<sup>7</sup> *CIL* 2.2340.

<sup>8</sup> *CIL* 2.7892.

<sup>9</sup> *CIL* 8.25.

no.<sup>10</sup> There an arc that one time held a golden equestrian statue honored the restoration of the port of Ancona, a port town important because of its proximity to Dalmatia, which Trajan funded with his own money. On the arc, the names *Plotinae Aug Coniugi Aug* and *Divae Marcianae Aug Sorori Aug*, small 4 and 5 word dedications are inscribed on either side of a huge inscription to *Imp Caesari Divi Nervae F. Nervae Traiano Optimo Aug Germanic Dacico*, explaining his good deed and thanking him for the use of his own money.<sup>11</sup> The women are merely side ornaments.

### 3.2.2 Numismatic Evidence of Worship of Marciana

Marciana's importance as a deified woman is manifested in her coins, since the legend CONSECRATIO first appears on her coins<sup>12</sup> struck in all metals.<sup>13</sup> One coin struck under Trajan between A.D. 112 and 113, before Marciana's deification, depict her wearing a diadem.<sup>14</sup> Coins struck in 113, however, bear CONSECRATIO on the reverse. An *aureus* from A.D. 113 has the diademed bust of Marciana on the obverse, and depicts the *carpentum* drawn by mules on the reverse.<sup>15</sup> A silver *denarius* from the same year depicts the diademed Marciana on the obverse under the legend DIVA AUGUSTA MARCIANA, with an eagle on the reverse.<sup>16</sup> A third coin struck between A.D. 114 and 117 again depicts a diademed Marciana on the obverse, with an eagle, on the reverse, this

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<sup>10</sup> *OCD*, 87.

<sup>11</sup> *CIL* 9.5894.

<sup>12</sup> Stevenson (1982) 537.

<sup>13</sup> Bickerman (1974) 366.

<sup>14</sup> Carson, fig. 139.

<sup>15</sup> Carson, fig. 140.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert, fig. 778. The eagle was a common figure on consecration reverses for both men and women, but peacocks, the divine attribute of Juno, appears only on the reverses of women. Stevenson (1982) 250.

time with wings spread open, holding a scepter in his claws.<sup>17</sup> The images on Marciana's coins offer no sense of Marciana's identity beyond her portrait. She is not equated to any abstract deities, and is not armed with any attributes of goddesses – it was her deification that was important to Trajan, not her representation on coins. Trajan proved his own *pietas* by deifying the woman who was such an honor to him, as Pliny pointed out.

### 3.3 Matidia

#### 3.3.1 Literary and Inscriptional Evidence of Worship of Matidia

Marciana is also featured on coins of her daughter, Matidia, Trajan's niece. Matidia died in 119, two years after Hadrian became emperor, and was deified that same year.<sup>18</sup> Like Marciana, Matidia is largely ignored by contemporary Roman historians. The *Historia Augusta* mentions her familial piety: she, along with Plotina and Attianus, escorted Trajan's ashes from Antioch to Rome.<sup>19</sup> It also mentions that Hadrian held games to honor his mother-in-law. In 119 A.D. he held gladiatorial games,<sup>20</sup> and he also gave *aromatica* to the people in her honor.<sup>21</sup> It's possible that Matidia was married twice, once to L. Mindius, with whom she had Mindia Matidia, commonly called Matidia Minor, and once to L. Vibius Sabinus, with whom she had Vibia Sabina, who later married Hadrian.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Giacosa, fig. 23.

<sup>18</sup> *OCD*, 937.

<sup>19</sup> H.A., *Had.* 5.9.

<sup>20</sup> H.A., *Had.* 9.9.

<sup>21</sup> H.A., *Had.* 19.5.

<sup>22</sup> Boatwright (1991) 517.

Inscriptional evidence of the worship of Matidia is scarce. Matidia's consecration under Hadrian was celebrated by the Arval Brethren in A.D. 120 in January *in consecrationem Matidiae Augustae, socrus Imperatoris Caesaris Trainini Hadriani Augusti, unguenti pondo duo nomine college fratrum arvalium*.<sup>23</sup> This is the only mention of any of the Trajanic women in the *Acta* of the Arval Brethren. She was not sacrificed to, but rather two measurements of oil were offered on her behalf. There are not many dedications of *sacra* extant, though one from Rome does call her the *felicitas auctor*.<sup>24</sup> More common are inscriptions to the *flaminicae* and *sacerdotes* of her cult. One Caesia was her *maxima sacerdos* in Ager Mediolaniensis,<sup>25</sup> and an inscription honoring Lepida, the *sacerdos* of *diva* Augusta and of *diva* Matidia at Ariminum suggests that perhaps one woman could serve two cults at once.<sup>26</sup> It also states that she paid for the inscription with her own money. One last inscription honors Clodia, the *sacerdos* of *diva* Matidia, but the patrons are unexpected: the *collegia fabrorum et centonariorum*, the colleges of firefighters and craftsmen.<sup>27</sup> During the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian there is a marked increase of dedications paid for by local guilds and colleges. The *decuriones*, military officers, are noted most often. Finally there were the sculptural and buildings dedicated in her honor. A medallion of Hadrian shows a temple, regarded as the temple of Matidia, flanked by two smaller buildings, the *basilicae* of Marciana and Matidia.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *CIL* 2080.

<sup>24</sup> *CIL* 6.40516.

<sup>25</sup> *CIL* 5.5647.

<sup>26</sup> *CIL* 11.415.

<sup>27</sup> *SupIt* 8, *Br* 003 bis.

<sup>28</sup> Keltanen (2002), 114 n. 55 For the temple, cf. Platner (1929) 331, for *basilicae*, cf. Platner (1929) 81.

There was also an altar mentioned in an inscription from Rome, but it is otherwise unknown.<sup>29</sup>

The evidence of worship of Matidia is so scarce that there is little to glean about her cult. We know that she did have a cult with priestesses, and we know that there was most likely a cult to her in Rome in her own temple. But beyond that it is difficult to say what her cult was like, what kind of people worshipped her, or how important she was. The lack of evidence suggests that there were not many dedications made to her throughout the Empire, and so her cult may not have been that active.

### 3.3.2. Numismatic Evidence of Worship of Matidia

Matidia's divinity was most often legitimized through her mother. Early coins capitalize on her relationship to her Marciana, who was already deified by Trajan himself. One *aureus* struck between A.D. 115 and 117 depicts a diademed Matidia under the legend MATIDIA AUG DIVAE MARCIANAЕ F. The reverse depicts Matidia as *Pietas*, standing between two small children, perhaps Matidia the Younger and Sabina, Matidia's children.<sup>30</sup> A silver *denarius* features the same obverse and reverse, with *Pietas* standing under the legend PIETAS AUGUST.<sup>31</sup> Matidia, like Marciana, was depicted in her family role: she was the pious guardian of Trajan's ashes, and she was the chaste and faithful mother of two children. Her fertility allowed Trajan's line to continue, and produced another *diva*.

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<sup>29</sup> Richardson (1992) 54. Inscription is *CIL* 6. 31893.

<sup>30</sup> Carson, fig. 141, Giacosa, fig. 24.

<sup>31</sup> Herbert, fig. 780.

### 3.4 Plotina

#### 3.4.1 Literary Evidence of Worship of Plotina

Plotina, the wife of Trajan, was deified by her adopted son Hadrian in A.D. 123, six years after the Trajan's death. Plotina was a controversial figure in Roman literature, though the attention paid to her manipulations does not approach that paid to Livia's, and leans toward the scandalous. The *Historia Augusta* paints her as a woman with moral flexibility, but one loyal to her adopted son. Dio Cassius also relates sensational stories about her rule, creating a lovestruck, incredibly clever woman. Dio Cassius states outright that Plotina was in love with Hadrian, and therefore used all her influence to make sure he was adopted by Trajan and became emperor.<sup>32</sup> Hadrian enjoyed her favor early in his political career. Due to her influence, he was designated a legate at the time of the Parthian expedition,<sup>33</sup> and she also helped him to become consul a second time while Trajan was still alive.<sup>34</sup> Most incredibly, Plotina orchestrated the adoption of Hadrian. Supposedly she had a man with a weak voice impersonate Trajan and name Hadrian as heir when Trajan decided to choose another,<sup>35</sup> and that she also signed Trajan's letters herself.<sup>36</sup> Plotina, unlike Trajan's sister and niece, seemed to have some

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<sup>32</sup> Dio Cassius, 69.1.

<sup>33</sup> H.A., *Had*, 4.

<sup>34</sup> H.A., *Had*. 4.4.

<sup>35</sup> H.A., *Had*. 4.10.

<sup>36</sup> Dio Cassius, 69.4.

semblance of influence over the emperors, even though it was represented in a less than flattering light.<sup>37</sup>

Because of her support of him, Hadrian conferred divine honors upon Plotina. Trajan seemed to have little regard for her, preferring to honor in public his sister and niece before his wife. When she died, Dio Cassius reports that Hadrian wore black for nine days, dedicated a temple to her, and composed hymns to her.<sup>38</sup> The temple Hadrian erected in Plotina's honor was a basilica at Nemausus, Plotina's hometown, one that was made with exceptional skill, around A.D. 122-123.<sup>39</sup> Hadrian recognized the value of a strong feminine public figure, and therefore encouraged images and honors for Plotina to be places around the Empire.

### 3.4.2 Inscriptional Evidence of Worship of Plotina

Besides the reports of contemporary Roman historians, there is evidence that Plotina had cults throughout the Empire. There are no dedications of buildings or *sacra* to her, but rather to her priestesses. *Collegia* around the Empire also play a strong role in her worship by financing many of the *sacra*. To Aemilia, a *sacerdos* of *diva* Plotina in Cisalpine Gaul, the *collegium* of firemen set up a monument.<sup>40</sup> Likewise the military officers set up a monument for Valerius Ennius Marcellinus, a *flamen* of the *diva* Plotina.<sup>41</sup> Other inscriptions are monuments to the priestesses of *diva* Plotina without a collegial donor: a dedication to Cantia, the colonial *flaminica* of *diva* Plotina was found

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<sup>37</sup> Boatwright (1991) 532.

<sup>38</sup> Dio Cassius, 69.10.

<sup>39</sup> H.A., *Had.* 9.9.

<sup>40</sup> *CIL* 5.4387.

<sup>41</sup> *InscrIT* 9.1.129.

under a triumphal arc in the forum Sempronius in Ariminum.<sup>42</sup> The priestesses were either wealthy themselves and paid for their own dedications, or were influential enough to induce a *collegium* to put up a dedication to them. It is worth noting that the dedications are made to the priestesses and not the *diva* – the position of *flaminica* or *sacerdos* must have held considerable influence in the provinces.

One monument at Pollentia is a little ambiguous regarding its dedicatees. It is extraordinary at any rate because of its dedication to both *diva* Plotina and *diva* Faustina Maior: *Sacerdoti divae Plotinae Pollentiae divae Faustinae Taurinis divae Faustinae Maioris Concordiae coll den dr poll L D D D*. The inscription suggests that there was one *sacerdos* to *diva* Plotina at Pollentia, and to *diva* Faustina and to the *Concordia* of *diva* Faustina Maior at Taurus.<sup>43</sup> Faustina Maior was not deified until her death in A.D. 141, nearly 20 years after Plotina's deification. Does this mean that the worship of Plotina was still going on twenty years after her deification, or that the same individual was the *sacerdos* of both, and that she became the *sacerdos* of Faustina Maior after her services were no longer need with Plotina? There is no other reference to a cult of *Concordia*, though the abstract is immensely important to Faustina Maior, as will be discussed below.

In one last inscription from the Colonia Julia Karpis indicates that Plotina did have another shrine of some kind in the Empire: an *aedem quam Cassia Maximula flaminica divae Plotinae caelesti deae voverat*. Two men, a *sacerdos* and a *flamen* dedicated *suo sumptu a solo aedificatam D D marmoribus et museis et statua Pudicitae*

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<sup>42</sup> *CIL* 11.407.

<sup>43</sup> *CIL* 5.7617.

*Aug et thorace Caelestis Augustae ornaverunt et die dedicationis decurionibus sportulas dederunt.*<sup>44</sup> Plotina was honored with marble (presumably statues) and statue of *Pudicitia Augusta*, a corselet, and little baskets of sacrifices. The statue of *Pudicitia Augusta*, Augustan Chastity, must have been meant to highlight Plotina's own chastity, a valuable trait in an empress. This is one of the rare inscriptions which actually describes the ritual of a cult. There is no petition of any kind, but the goddess is offered gifts from the celebrants as well as the local *collegium* of military officers, and her shrine or temple was vowed by a woman, who obviously had some power. There is some emphasis on the money that the celebrants spent on these gifts, and such a presentation would have certainly stuck out in the minds of those who read the inscriptions.

### 3.4.3 Numismatic Evidence of Worship of Plotina

There is no mention of Plotina in the records of the Arval Brethren, but her image is found on many coins from the reign of Trajan to Hadrian. Two coins struck during Trajan's reign bearing Plotina's image depict her wearing a diadem, though she was not yet deified. One silver *denarius*, struck in A.D. 112 to 115, depicts the *Ara Pudicitiae* on the reverse of a Plotina coin,<sup>45</sup> while another *aureus*, struck between A.D. 113 and 117 shows Vesta on the reverse, seated with the palladium and long scepter.<sup>46</sup> Vesta was the only reverse type of Plotina during Hadrian's reign, usually seated and holding the *palladium*.<sup>47</sup> Vesta was the most important symbol of Rome's *aeternitas*, the keeper of

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<sup>44</sup> *CIL* 8.993.

<sup>45</sup> Carson, fig. 138.

<sup>46</sup> Giacosa, fig. 22.

<sup>47</sup> Keltanen (2002) 110.

the everlasting flame, and Hadrian associates Plotina with the same trait.<sup>48</sup> Plotina's coins are also "firsts" in other categories: hers is the first to use the legend PUDICITIA on her coins, which began somewhere around 112, and she is also the first to use the legend FIDES AUGUSTA. In addition, she is one of only four empresses who used Minerva as a reverse type.<sup>49</sup>

Two coins struck under Hadrian, after Plotina's deification, depict her with Trajan. One *aureus* from A.D. 122 has Hadrian on the obverse with Trajan and Plotina facing each other on the reverse, indicating the importance of both of his adopted parents to Hadrian.<sup>50</sup> A second *aureus*, struck between A.D. 134 and 138 shows the bust of Hadrian on the obverse, and Trajan and Plotina facing each other on the reverse, with stars above their heads, with the legend DIVIS PARENTIBUS.<sup>51</sup>

The coinage of Plotina sets a standard for the future *divae*. There was a large number of types, and her association with one particular goddess, Vesta, recalled the association of Livia with Ceres. Hadrian especially placed an importance on the imagery of the empresses. While this is not borne out in Matidia, his mother-in-law, it is in Plotina, his patroness and great-aunt, and also in Sabina, his wife. Whatever the condition of their marriage, Hadrian recognized the importance of making her image as accessible as possible throughout the Empire. Coins were handled by many classes of people everyday, and their images would be staring at the handlers constantly. Thus, the coinage of Sabina, and the Faustinae after her, began her honor her as an Augusta and

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<sup>48</sup> Keltanen (2002) 111.

<sup>49</sup> Keltanen (2002) 112.

<sup>50</sup> Carson, fig. 160.

<sup>51</sup> Giacosa, fig. 25.

then as a *diva*, making her a symbol of Roman femininity throughout the stages of her life.

### 3.5 Sabina

#### 3.5.1 Literary Evidence of the Worship of Sabina

Sabina, daughter of Matidia and grand-niece of Trajan, was the last woman to be deified from her family. Sabina was the glue that connected Hadrian to Trajan's family, for although Hadrian was adopted by Trajan, the circumstances of the adoption were dubious. A marriage to Sabina lent an air of legitimacy to Hadrian's rule. The *Historia Augusta* and the *Epitome de Caesaribus* are the only Roman literary sources to consider Sabina, and both are of dubious repute. The author of the *Historia Augusta* writes that Hadrian married her with the support of Plotina, but that Trajan had little interest in the match.<sup>52</sup> The history also relates that Hadrian ordered Septicius Clarus and Suetonius Tranquillanus, the historian, to be removed from office because they were treating Sabina a little too casually.<sup>53</sup> In its last mention of Sabina, the *Historia Augusta* reports that there was a rumor when she died that Hadrian had poisoned her.<sup>54</sup> Nothing is written about her deification or her worship, but the inscriptional and numismatic evidence is legion.

#### 3.5.2 Inscriptional Evidence of Worship of Sabina

Compared to her predecessors, there is much more inscriptional evidence that Sabina was worshipped as a *diva*. Most inscriptions are simply dedications of *sacra* to her, but there are two inscriptions to *flaminicae* of *diva* Sabina. One, from Navaria in

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<sup>52</sup> H.A., *Had.* 2.10.

<sup>53</sup> H.A., *Had.* 11.3.

<sup>54</sup> H.A., *Had.* 23.9.

Italy, suggests that Albucia may have been the *flaminica* of more than one Imperial cult: *et Albuciae M F candidate flaminicae divae Juliae Novar flaminic divae Sabinae Ticini*,<sup>55</sup> perhaps a situation similar to that of the *sacerdos* of Plotina and Faustina. Another inscription from Ariminum includes a reference to a *flaminica* of *diva* Sabina.<sup>56</sup> There is also a base in Saldae,<sup>57</sup> and one in Thamugadi,<sup>58</sup> a colony of military veterans in the province of Numidia founded under Trajan in A.D. 100,<sup>59</sup> both dedicated to *Divae Sabinae Aug.* There is only one structure dedicated to Sabina: an altar. She has no temple in any location of the Empire. Not much is known about the altar itself, just that it is shown on coins of Hadrian and that it possibly stood where Sabina's pyre stood in Rome.<sup>60</sup> There is not much to be derived from these inscriptions except that Sabina had cults throughout the Empire. There are no long descriptions of offerings and money, as was the case with Plotina.

Of two inscriptions found in Rome issued by Hadrian himself, one seems to have a dubious connection to the Colonia Julia Augusta,<sup>61</sup> and the other seems to be from Africa, with a dedication of *divae Sabinae Augustae Sabrathenses ex Africa*. The settlement of Sabratha earned colonial status in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., so it is possible that

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<sup>55</sup> *CIL* 5.6514.

<sup>56</sup> *CIL* 11.408.

<sup>57</sup> *CIL* 8.8929.

<sup>58</sup> *CIL* 8.17847.

<sup>59</sup> *OCD*, 1491-2.

<sup>60</sup> Richardson (1992) 338.

<sup>61</sup> *CIL* 6.40528.

this monument celebrates that occasion.<sup>62</sup> The second inscription also involved men besides Hadrian: the place of the dedication was *adsignatus a Vaerio Urbico et Aemilio Papo curatioribus operum locorum publicorum*. These men garnered the favor of the emperor himself by assigning the location of the *sacrum*. Hadrian stands out as the only emperor up to that point to actually be recorded as having commissioned a *sacrum* to his deified wife. Though the literary evidence of the previous chapters indicates that the emperors commissioned statues or gave festivals, there are no surviving inscriptions describing their role in the process. By including his name on the inscription, Hadrian demonstrates his *pietas* and tries to quell any rumors that he and his wife may have experienced any marital discord. This is evidenced by another inscription: *Imperatori Hadriano Olympio et Iunoni Coniugali Sabinae*.<sup>63</sup> Benario states that he found no other instance of *coniugalis* in conjunction with Sabina in his research. The marriage of Hadrian and Sabina is also considered in her coinage, discussed below.

### 3.5.3 Numismatic Evidence of Worship of Sabina

There is a large amount of extant coins of Sabina, many struck before her deification. These coins show Sabina on the obverse, wearing a diadem, the sign of power. Most of the legends read SABINA AUGUSTA, though some add HADRIANI AUG PP. The images on the reverse, however, are varied. There are quite a few of *Concordia* on the reverse, seated, holding a *patera* and a cornucopia.<sup>64</sup> These, in conjunction with the inscription with *coniugali* and Hadrian's dedications, are indications

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<sup>62</sup> *OCD*, 1342.

<sup>63</sup> *A.E.* 1939, 190, in Benario (1980) 37.

<sup>64</sup> Giacosa fig. 27, Herbert fig. 889, 891, 896.

that perhaps the public did not believe their marriage to be a happy one, and that Hadrian was trying to convince them otherwise.<sup>65</sup> *Pietas* is another common image associated with Sabina. One coin shows *Pietas* with her hands on the heads of a young boy and girl, reminiscent of the coin of Matidia standing between her two daughters.<sup>66</sup> Another coin features a seated *Pietas*, holding the *patera* and the scepter.<sup>67</sup> *Pudicitia* also appears on the reverse, with her seated holding her hand to her lips on one *sestertius*,<sup>68</sup> and raising her veil on the reverse of a *denarius*.<sup>69</sup> Sabina is not only associated with virtues before her deification, but also Olympian goddesses. One *sestertius* shows Ceres seated holding ears of corn and a torch.<sup>70</sup> Vesta sits holding a *palladium* and a scepter on the reverse of a *denarius*.<sup>71</sup> Even Juno, the queen, holding a *patera* and a scepter, adorns the reverse of a *denarius*.<sup>72</sup> One tetradrachm from 128 or 130 shows a very worn Cybele on the reverse, but the origin of the coin is unknown.<sup>73</sup> This is the first Roman coin struck with the image of Cybele on it, though provincial coins had already been using her image in association with the goddess.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Benario (1980) 39.

<sup>66</sup> Giacosa fig. 26.

<sup>67</sup> Herbert fig. 996.

<sup>68</sup> Herbert, fig. 944.

<sup>69</sup> Herbert, fig. 897.

<sup>70</sup> Herbert, fig. 993.

<sup>71</sup> Herbert, fig. 898.

<sup>72</sup> Herbert, fig. 892.

<sup>73</sup> Carson, fig. 168.

<sup>74</sup> Keltanen (2002) 123.

The goddess most associated with Sabina in her extant coinage is Venus. The reverse of one denarius bears the legend VENERI GENETRICI.<sup>75</sup> The reverse of another *denarius* shows Venus Genetrix, holding an apple, drawing up her robe.<sup>76</sup> A *sestertius* also shows Venus Genetrix in a field with an apple.<sup>77</sup> This seems a bit strange, because Sabina and Hadrian had no children, another fact that may have initiated gossip about the status of their marriage. It is likely, though, that Hadrian was trying to spark the connection between Venus and the emperors in the minds of the Roman people. He did, in fact, revive the cult of Venus during his reign.<sup>78</sup>

An *aureus* from A.D. 128 may be hinting at Sabina's deification by depicting Juno standing near a bird, probably a peacock and holding a staff on the reverse.<sup>79</sup> Sabina's consecration coin was struck in A.D. 136. The obverse shows a veiled bust of Sabina, a strange departure from the bold diadem to the demure veil, and the reverse shows Sabina seated on an eagle under the legend CONSECRATIO.<sup>80</sup> A copper *sestertius* struck after her deification depicts DIVA AUGUSTA SABINA veiled and wearing a wreath of grain ears on the obverse, while the reverse shows an eagle standing on a scepter in a field under the legend SC.<sup>81</sup>

The coinage of Sabina demonstrates more than any other medium Hadrian's understanding of the importance of imagery. The coinage of Plotina and Sabina, both of

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<sup>75</sup> Herbert, fig. 896.

<sup>76</sup> Herbert, fig. 894.

<sup>77</sup> Herbert, fig. 995.

<sup>78</sup> Keltanen (2002) 120.

<sup>79</sup> Carson, fig. 161.

<sup>80</sup> Carson, fig. 162.

<sup>81</sup> Herbert, fig. 997.

which were under the control of Hadrian at some point, uses association with goddesses and virtues more than the coinage of Marciana and Matidia. Hadrian knew that coins were a reliable and enduring way to insinuate image associations into the minds of the Roman people.

### 3.6 Conclusion

The Trajanic women are confounding because we possess little information of them. It is hard to analyze any political power they may have had since the primary literary sources are not the most reliable. This also makes it difficult to analyze their inscriptions – we don't know if they were patrons of *collegia* around the Empire, or if they were involved with the founding of a colony. We do know from the *Historia Augusta* that they traveled with the emperors, and were thus visible to the citizens and inhabitants of the Empire. However, the lack of concrete information may be a result of the perceived role of the women of the Trajanic family. Pliny the Younger, in his *Panegyric* to Trajan, praises the modesty of Plotina and Marciana:

*Obtulerat illis senatus cognomen Augustarum, quod certatim deprecatae sunt, quam diu appellationem patris patriae tu recusasses, seu quod plus esse in eo iudicabant, si uxor et soror tua quam si Augustae dicerentur. Sed, quaecumque illis ratio tantam moderatiam suasit, hoc magis dignae sunt, quae in animis nostris et sint et habeantur augustae, quia non vocantur.*<sup>82</sup>

The senate had offered the cognomen of Augusta to them, which they certainly avoided, as long as you refused the title of “pater patriae”, perhaps because they judged there to be more to it, if they were called your wife or sister rather than “Augusta.” But, whatever rationale brought on such great moderation, they are more worthy for this, who in our minds both are and are held “Augustae”, because they are not so called.

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<sup>82</sup> Plin. *Pan.* 84.

To Pliny, the deference of the imperial women to Trajan was their most laudable quality. Because they were humble and did not make any pretenses of power, they were an asset to Trajan's imperial family and proved that they knew their place.<sup>83</sup> Unlike Drusilla, for example, reproduction was not a concern of these women, because adoption was so common.<sup>84</sup> Thus there were no images of fertility, no symbols of plenty – they were unnecessary. Dio Cassius and the *Historia Augusta* describe Plotina's maneuvers to make Hadrian emperor, but they do not allude to any political aspirations that she may have held on her own. The other women of the imperial family are mentioned by the Roman historians as minor players, women who supported their husbands, brother, and son-in-law, but not women who actively sought any kind of recognition for themselves. They were the perfect exemplars of the Roman matron.

Within a few generations, the concept of deification changed dramatically. Because Livia was widely believed to have merited her consecration, the deifications of the other Julio-Claudian women were met with lukewarm and even ridiculing responses. By the time the line of Trajan took power, merit no longer seemed necessary for deification. If the Julio-Claudian women were deified because of the love of their husbands (and father), the Trajanic women were deified because of their power as symbols. There can be no other possibility – with the exception of Plotina, and even her role is not exactly clear, the women were not involved in politics or philanthropy. The emperors did not seem to be extraordinarily fond of them. They were simply good women who stayed out of trouble, and were rewarded for their modesty. The worship of these *divae* reflects this mood: the dedications are not made for any particular reason, and

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<sup>83</sup> Boatwright (1991) 535.

<sup>84</sup> Boatwright (1991) 536.

the coins present the symbols of femininity the emperors wished to associate with their reign. Veneration had become commonplace, an honor accorded to a member of the imperial family simply because of their status in the Empire.

## CHAPTER 4 THE ANTONINES

### 4.1 Introduction

The Antonine family deified only two of its women, Annia Galeria Faustina, known as Faustina Maior, the wife of Antoninus Pius, and Annia Faustina, known as Faustina Minor, the daughter of the Faustina Maior and the wife of Marcus Aurelius. The Antonine Emperors enjoyed a great amount of popularity and adoration, and the public extended those feelings to the empresses as well. Faustina Maior was especially loved and adored, and the images of her that survive emphasize her importance in the imperial household. Adoration of Antonine women extended to the reaches of the Empire, bringing to fruition a trend that began in the family of Trajan and Hadrian: the tightening of the grip of Rome and Roman culture on the provinces. The system of adoption had produced four sound emperors, and the Roman people were eager to praise their imperial family. The same system also lessened the importance of reproduction and fertility, as witnessed in the Trajanic family. The Faustinae, however, had no problems conceiving, and it is the fecundity of Faustina Minor that returned the system of succession to family dynasties (with disastrous results). The Faustinae were portrayed in the *Historia Augusta*, the source from which most information about their lives comes. Both women were accused of adultery, and both enjoyed the trust and adoration of their husbands. The charges of adultery are somewhat dubious, considering the source and the sensational means of reporting, and the worship of the Faustinae throughout the Empire suggests either that the reports were not true or that they did not matter to the public.

## 4.2 Faustina Maior

### 4.2.1 Literary Evidence of Worship of Faustina Maior

The Faustinae were not prayed to by the Arval Brethren, though Faustina Minor was prayed for by the Arval Brethren sometime between A.D. 169 and 177: *servaveris saluum incolumemque cum Faustina Augusta et Commodo Caesare ceterisque omnibus domus Augustae eventumque bonum*.<sup>1</sup> However, there are many *sacra* dedicated to them throughout the Empire. Keltanen suggests that after the reign of Sabina and the shrewd usage of imagery by Hadrian, the figure of the empress was incorporated into monumental art and the number of coins with their images increased.<sup>2</sup> Faustina Maior died three years into her husband Antoninus Pius' reign, but throughout her reign, her image was never out of sight of Roman citizens everywhere.

Roman historians relate Antoninus' love and esteem for his wife, though rumors abounded about her loose morals. The *Historia Augusta* states that the honors Faustina received were instituted mainly by the Senate: she was called Augusta by them,<sup>3</sup> and that they consecrated her upon her death.<sup>4</sup> After her consecration, Faustina was awarded a temple and *flaminicae*, statues made of gold and silver, and her image was placed in all the circuses. The temple was dedicated to her alone until the death of Antoninus Pius in A.D. 161, when the temple became dedicated to them both.<sup>5</sup> The Senate also attempted

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<sup>1</sup> *CIL* 6.2093, *Antica* 85.

<sup>2</sup> Keltanen (2002) 141.

<sup>3</sup> H.A., *A.P.*, 5.2.

<sup>4</sup> H.A., *A.P.*, 6.7.

<sup>5</sup> Platner (1929) 13.

to change the name of September and October to Antoninus and Faustina, much as they had suggested to Tiberius, but Antoninus refused the honor.<sup>6</sup> Antoninus Pius also honored her with his own decrees, as Hadrian had done with Sabina: he decided that a statue of her would be put in the Senate house,<sup>7</sup> and in Faustina's honor he also established a program to take care of poor girls, and he called them the *Faustinianae*.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Inscriptural Evidence of Worship of Faustina Maior

Even before her deification, dedications were made to Faustina Maior. One marble tablet in Rome was offered *pro salute Imperatoris Caesaris Titi Aeli Hadriani Antonini Augusti Pii, patris patriae, et Faustinae Augustae*.<sup>9</sup> Much like the formula of the Arval Brethren, the inscription offers a prayer for the safety of the emperor, with a focus on his grand lineage, and includes the wife of the emperor in the prayers for well-being.

The inscriptural evidence of dedication to and worship of *diva* Faustina Maior is scattered around the Empire. There are dedications of *sacra* found in the forum of Aeclanum,<sup>10</sup> Tarraco,<sup>11</sup> Sassina,<sup>12</sup> Voleini,<sup>13</sup> and Lactoria.<sup>14</sup> These inscriptions do not indicate who paid for the *sacra* or for what occasion they were dedicated. There was also

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<sup>6</sup> H.A., *A.P.*, 10.1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> H.A., *A.P.*, 8.2.

<sup>9</sup> *CIL* 6.40541.

<sup>10</sup> *CIL* 9.1113.

<sup>11</sup> *CIL* 2.4096.

<sup>12</sup> *CIL* 9.6500.

<sup>13</sup> *CIL* 11.7279.

<sup>14</sup> *CIL* 13.527.

an altar of *Diva Faustina Maior* placed possibly where her pyre stood, but there is little known about it.<sup>15</sup> There were inscriptions, however, with clear intent of worship: in Falerio, Antonia, the colonial *sacerdos* of *diva Faustina* was able, with a generous donation from the local division of *decuriones*, to erect statues in the theatre *quas ad exornandum theatrum*.<sup>16</sup> The involvement of *collegia* around the Empire continued as it had under Trajan and Hadrian. While the dedication of named individuals do not cease completely, it became more and more common to see *P D D*, or *D D* on the last line of inscriptions, indicating that the dedication was placed by decree of the *decuriones* or erected by their decree. Individual power seemed to be replaced in importance by the power of groups, at least in dedications to *divae*.

One inscription from Mantissa near Ostia describes a dedication to Antoninus Pius and *diva Faustina Maior* by the decree of the *decuriones ob insignem eorum concordiam utique in ara virgines quae in colonia Ostiensi nubent item mariti earum supplicent*.<sup>17</sup> The personified marital harmony between the *diva* and her husband could now look over the young women and their bridegrooms in the colony, perhaps as statues in a shrine dedicated to them, though it is not clear from the inscription. The *concordia* between Antoninus Pius and Faustina Maior was an important propaganda theme during Antoninus' reign, even after Faustina's death. This inscription more than those mentioned above indicate a kind of belief in the power of the *concordia* between Faustina and Antoninus. It is as though the emperor and empress are giving their blessing to the maidens and their bridegrooms as they make their prayers concerning their marriage.

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<sup>15</sup> Richardson (1992) 338.

<sup>16</sup> *CIL* 9.5428.

<sup>17</sup> *CIL* 14.5326.

Another evidence of their *concordia* was the relief of their joint apotheosis on the Column of Antoninus Pius. The column was erected by Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, Antoninus' heirs, and depicted the apotheosis of the couple together on the figure of a winged Genius, flanked by eagles. Roma watches the ascension from the lower left, while a personification of the Campus Martius reclines and watches from the lower right.<sup>18</sup> Even in death, the couple was together – they were depicted as enjoying the rewards of their pious life together. Where the images and hints dropped about the *concordia* between Sabina and Hadrian seemed forced, the *concordia* between Antoninus and Faustina was evident to all, a fortunate virtue in any marriage, and was considered a part of their combined divine nature.

#### 4.2.3 Numismatic Evidence of Worship of Faustina Maior

The images of the Faustinae, especially of Faustina Maior, were best preserved in the coins of the period, in which the portrayal of the empress as a powerful entity was of utmost importance. There is very little coinage of Faustina Maior because she died three years after her husband became emperor,<sup>19</sup> but her deification remained a very hallowed event through his reign. A coin dating before her death with her image on the obverse shows *Concordia* on the reverse, holding a *patera* and a double cornucopia.<sup>20</sup> Another coin just before her deification indicates her importance to the Empire: the obverse is simply the bust of Faustina under the legend FAUSTINA AUGUSTA, but the reverse shows Juno seated on a throne with a peacock near at hand, the bird that often appeared

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<sup>18</sup> Richardson (1992) 95.

<sup>19</sup> Keltanen (2002) 125.

<sup>20</sup> Herbert, fig. 1027.

on the consecration coins of other *divae*.<sup>21</sup> Again, *concordia* appears as an important virtue to Faustina and her husband – indeed the empress herself is associated with the virtue.

Faustina's consecration and *diva* coins are much more common, as they were minted throughout the reign of Antoninus Pius. A consecration coin of copper, minted in A.D. 141 was particularly detailed. The obverse bore the legend DIVA FAUSTINA, while the reverse bore an image of Vesta in a field, sacrificing over a lighted altar, holding a *patera* and a torch, under the legend CONSECRATIO.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes an eagle or a winged Victory depicted the apotheosis of Faustina into the heavens.<sup>23</sup> Vesta appears on the reverse of another *diva* coin, again holding a torch and the *palladium*,<sup>24</sup> and yet another, this time standing on the obverse.<sup>25</sup> Her association with Vesta recalls Plotina's association with the goddess: Faustina, now a goddess, was a guardian of the *aeternitas* of Rome. An *aureus* struck under Antoninus Pius shows a diademed and veiled Faustina on the obverse, with Ceres on the reverse, wearing a veil, and holding a scepter and a torch, under the legend AUGUSTA.<sup>26</sup> A copper *sestertius* dated to A.D. 141 bears the legend DIVA FAUSTINA on the obverse, and AETERNITAS on the reverse, depicting a Faustina seated in a *biga* drawn by two elephants with drivers.<sup>27</sup> An *aureus* from A.D. 141 shows the *diva* Faustina on the obverse, but the reverse depicts

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<sup>21</sup> Carson, fig. 175.

<sup>22</sup> Herbert, fig. 1029.

<sup>23</sup> Keltanen (2002) 127.

<sup>24</sup> Giacosa, fig. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Carson, fig. 179.

<sup>26</sup> Giacosa, fig. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Herbert, fig. 1028.

three small children under the legend PUELLAE FAUSTINIANAE.<sup>28</sup> Finally, the legend FECUNDITAS appears for the first time on Faustina Maior's coinage, holding a scepter in her hands and a baby in her arms.<sup>29</sup> The coins associated the goddesses of plenty, fertility, and *aeternitas* with Faustina: she was the first empress since Vespasian's wife Domitilla to produce a direct heir to the Empire.<sup>30</sup>

### 4.3 Faustina Minor

#### 4.3.1 Literary Evidence of the Worship of Faustina Minor

Faustina Minor, like her mother, was very popular. The daughter of Antoninus Pius and Faustina Maior, she, like the women of the Trajanic family, carried the imperial blood, along with her cousin Marcus Aurelius, into the next generation of rulers.

Faustina lived much longer than her mother, and there is more information about her and her life related in the works of contemporary Roman historians. Like her mother, there were rumors that Faustina was unfaithful, and that Marcus Aurelius overlooked her escapades. The *Historia Augusta* suggests that their son, Commodus, had such a love of gladiatorial games because Faustina had an affair with a gladiator, though she later confessed to her husband.<sup>31</sup> Though Faustina was supposedly unfaithful, Aurelius was reportedly aware of Faustina's importance to the Empire. When Aurelius refused to

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<sup>28</sup> Carson, fig. 178.

<sup>29</sup> Keltanen (2002) 131.

<sup>30</sup> Matidia's daughter, Sabina, did become empress, but Matidia was never an empress – she was the niece of the emperor Trajan and the mother-in-law of the emperor Hadrian. The empress Faustina's child, Faustina minor, would become empress herself when she married her cousin Marcus Aurelius, another blood relative of Faustina Maior – the son of her brother by Domitia Lucilla.

<sup>31</sup> H.A., *M.A.*, 19.2.

punish his wife even though he found out about her affairs, he said: *si uxorem dimittimus, reddamus et dotem*.<sup>32</sup> The dowry, of course, was the Empire.

Faustina's alleged crimes went beyond those of passion: there were rumors that she was in league with Cassius, who attempted to overthrow the Empire. The *Historia Augusta* reports that correspondence from the time acquitted Faustina of the charges, and that she actually petitioned her husband for lenient treatment of the offenders.<sup>33</sup> Dio Cassius, however, reports the opposite, that Cassius and Faustina actually had plans to marry after Marcus Aurelius' death so that they could rule, since Commodus would be too young to assume the throne.<sup>34</sup> Dio Cassius also suggests that Faustina may have died from her own hand to escape punishment for her actions, but concedes that she may also have died from the gout.<sup>35</sup> The *Historia Augusta* reports that Faustina died in the hills of mount Taurus in the village of Halala, from a sudden sickness caught while on military campaign with Marcus Aurelius.<sup>36</sup>

If there is one pattern that endures through the representation of imperial women in the writings of Roman contemporaries, it is that the more political power they are perceived to have, the more they are represented as sexually promiscuous or morally corrupt. Faustina Maior was relatively protected because of her early death, but Faustina Minor, because she lived so long and enjoyed the love of her husband, garnered such attention in spades. The truth of her actions can never be ascertained, but her reputation

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<sup>32</sup>H.A., *M.A.* 19.7.

<sup>33</sup>H.A., *Avidus Cassius*, 11.1.

<sup>34</sup> Dio Cassius, 72.22.

<sup>35</sup> Dio Cassius, 72.29.

<sup>36</sup> H.A., *M.A.*, 26.4.

among the people, evidence by their dedications, suggests that even if she was unfaithful and treasonous, the people loved her anyway. It seems unlikely that a society would pay such honors to an individual who threatened to overturn an extremely popular ruler.

Many honors were conferred upon Faustina Minor at her death. The senate consecrated her and conferred a temple to her. Dio Cassius relates that the Senate also did not put to death anyone involved with Cassius,<sup>37</sup> and that silver images of Marcus and Faustina were erected in the temple of Venus at Rome, where an altar was erected for brides and bridegrooms to offer sacrifices, similar perhaps to the one erected in Ostia for their parents. Marcus Aurelius also honored his wife: he instituted another program of *Faustinianae*, as his father-in-law did for his mother-in-law. Since Faustina died while on military campaign, he called her the *mater castrorum*.<sup>38</sup> The village where she died Aurelius made a colony and erected a temple to her there.<sup>39</sup> Golden statues of Faustina were also carried into the theatre on a chair during public festivals.<sup>40</sup> In an odd turn of events, a later emperor, Caracalla, revoked the temple of Faustina and her divine name. The son of Elagabalus later made it a temple to himself or to Syrian Jove or the Sun.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Inscriptural Evidence of Worship of Faustina Minor

There is some inscripational evidence of Faustina's divinity, but the evidence can be easily confused with evidence for Faustina Maior, since there is rarely any differentiation made in inscriptions between the two *divae* Faustinae. The *sacra* that

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<sup>37</sup> Dio Cassius, 72.30.

<sup>38</sup> This title came into importance with Julia Domna.

<sup>39</sup> H.A., *A.C.* 19.4.

<sup>40</sup> Dio Cassius, 72.31.

<sup>41</sup> H.A., *A.C.*, 11.6-7.

definitely belong to Faustina Minor were dedicated to her at Piso by decree of the *decuriones*.<sup>42</sup> An inscription is found in Rome, probably in a theatre at Tibur, a resort town, reading *diva Faustina phsaltria Procha f Tibert Serot*.<sup>43</sup> The meaning is not entirely clear, but it seems a harpist named Procha may have been involved in some kind of honorary performance to Faustina Minor. An inscription with nearly identical wording was found in Mutina as well.<sup>44</sup> Like her mother, there was also an altar to *diva* Faustina Minor, but the specifics are unknown. It is projected that it stood where her funeral pyre stood in the city.<sup>45</sup>

Two marble bases were found in Rome on which the inscription described two statues dedicated to *diva* Faustina, the wife of Antoninus Pius, Faustina the Younger, and Commodus. One statue was a man in military garb erected in the forum, and another in civilian garb in the *pronaos* of the temple of the *divus* Antoninus Pius.<sup>46</sup> This inscription seems to follow the pattern of older inscriptions of the Julio-Claudian period, when a list of powerful men was inscribed along with the actual dedication. The main dedicator in this inscription was Titus Pomponius, who was a friend of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. A long list of titles and names follows, capped with the actual dedication of the statues. This kind of inscription, with the names of all the Augusti from Marcus Aurelius to Commodus, was erected not necessarily as a tribute to them, but a tribute to the his relationship with them and his high standing.

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<sup>42</sup> *CIL* 11.6323.

<sup>43</sup> *CIL* 6.10139.

<sup>44</sup> *CIL* 11.870.

<sup>45</sup> Richardson (1992) 338.

<sup>46</sup> *CIL* 6.41145.

### 4.3.3 Numismatic Evidence of Worship of Faustina Minor

The images on Faustina's coinage, more so than that of her mother's, indicate the values that were assigned to her as the empress: namely fertility and chastity. Faustina Minor lived through most of the reign of her husband, Marcus Aurelius, and produced 12 to 13 kids, seven of which were boys, though most of them died as children.<sup>47</sup> Her role in the imperial family was more earthly than her mother's: Faustina Maior lived on as a deified, idealized woman throughout Antoninus' reign, but Faustina Minor lived as flesh and blood and mind during Marcus' Aurelius' reign, and her actions were thus able to be scrutinized by the public. Therefore the imperial family dictated how her role should be interpreted: as a wife and mother.

Faustina Minor first appeared on coins during her father's reign, under the legend *FAUSTINA AUG PII AUG FIL*. One such *aureus* bore an image of a dove on the reverse, under the legend *CONCORDIA*.<sup>48</sup> A similar coin, a sestertius, bore *Pudicitia* on the reverse, seated demurely with a veil covering her face.<sup>49</sup> Another *aureus* from Antoninus' reign shows *Venus Genetrix* on the reverse, holding a long scepter in her left hand.<sup>50</sup> A *denarius* from the same time period shows *Venus* on the reverse, holding an apple and a rudder with a dolphin coiled around it.<sup>51</sup> When Faustina became Faustina Augusta and was no longer only referred to as the daughter of Antoninus, the fertility imagery became more prominent. The reverse of a silver *denarius*, under the legend

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<sup>47</sup> Keltanen (2002) 136.

<sup>48</sup> Giacosa, fig. 32.

<sup>49</sup> Herbert, fig. 1031.

<sup>50</sup> Giacosa, fig. 30.

<sup>51</sup> Herbert, fig. 1018.

FECUND AUGUSTAE depicts *Fecunditas* holding two babies in her arms while standing between two small girls.<sup>52</sup> An aureus struck under Aurelius, depicts *Felicitas* on the reverse, holding two children and standing between four more.<sup>53</sup> Finally an *aureus* from the reign of Marcus Aurelius shows Cybele between two lions, holding a tympanum, under the legend MATRI MAGNAE.<sup>54</sup> Faustina Minor's role was extremely clear: to produce as many heirs as possible.

Faustina Minor's consecration coins were not as popular as her mother's,<sup>55</sup> but they held their own distinctions. When Faustina was deified in A.D. 176, one *sestertius* in particular bears a strange legend. The obverse is a bust of *diva* Faustina, but the reverse depicts Faustina in a *biga*, under the legend SIDERIBUS RECEPTA, a legend found on no other woman's coin.<sup>56</sup> An *aureus* from the same year shows a veiled *diva* Faustina on the obverse, and Faustina sitting in front of the standards on the reverse, under the legend MATRI CASTRORUM,<sup>57</sup> the first woman to bear the title.

#### 4.4 Ambiguous Inscriptural Evidence

The inscriptions that do not make distinctions between Faustina Maior and Minor are mostly *sacra* dedicated throughout the Empire with no more the inscription than *divae Faustinae* or *divae Faustinae Augustae*. One inscription from Vibo suggests a cult to *diva* Faustina, since the military officers there helped paid Quinta, the *sacerdos*, to pay

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<sup>52</sup> Herbert, fig. 1041.

<sup>53</sup> Carson, fig. 190.

<sup>54</sup> Giacosa, fig. 31.

<sup>55</sup> Mattingly (1948) 149.

<sup>56</sup> Carson, fig. 201. I have found no other such coin in my research.

<sup>57</sup> Carson, fig. 176.

for a dedication.<sup>58</sup> In Ceccano, the military officers confer a bronze (*aes*) upon Saesina, the *sacerdos* of *diva* Faustina, *ob merita eius*.<sup>59</sup> Lastly, a silver statue of a man in gladiatorial outfit (*veste gladiat*) was erected by the *allector collegi*, or the officer in charge of collecting dues, to *diva* Faustina. It is not clear what *collegium* paid for the statue. It may have been dedicated, though, to Faustina Minor, since she supposedly had a great love of the games.<sup>60</sup>

#### 4.5 Conclusion

The Faustinae were adored by their husbands and the public alike, and so the charges of adultery, if true, hardly seem important. The adoration of their husbands propelled them to divinity, and also made them benefactresses after their death. The information surviving them does not accord them much by way of personality, but the identity created for them by the imperial family makes obvious their intended perception: fertile women who were good mothers and who were faithful to their husbands. Again, the “truth” of the *Historia Augusta* was not really revealed in the public image presented to the Empire: the Faustinae were deified and remembered for the love they had for their families, just as the imperial family had intended.

The ritual of deification evolves in the Antonine Age from an expected veneration to one that, while probably anticipated, was welcomed by the Roman people. While the women of Trajan and Hadrian were worshipped, the amount of inscriptions to them is considerable only when considering them together. For the Faustinae, though some inscriptions were ambiguous, there was certainly a good amount between the two women.

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<sup>58</sup> *CIL* 10.54.

<sup>59</sup> *CIL* 10.5656.

<sup>60</sup> *CIL* 6.3756.

The deification of Faustina Maior, in particular, seemed to have some resonance among the Roman people: perhaps it was the *concordia* between her and her husband, and the fact that he never remarried, but the love he had for her manifested itself in the adoration of the Roman people.

## CONCLUSION

Mattingly suggests that the Imperial cult was becoming “personal religion,”<sup>1</sup> based on the feelings of the emperors themselves. It seems, though, especially in light of the deifications of Drusilla, Poppaea, and Claudia, that the Imperial cult always subsisted of some kind of personal emotion, pushed upon the Roman public whether or not the sentiment was shared.

The honor of consecration became an expected honor for the emperor and empress. Although Livia Drusilla seemed to deserve her consecration, the honor was a long time coming. By the time of Trajan, the Senate was conferring honors upon women who seemed to do nothing to merit their deification except remain above public reproach. The change in attitude towards the honor of consecration was possibly due to the regularity of its conferral, but also possibly due to the evolving role of women in the *domus Augusta*. Livia will always be the quintessential diva. She was the epitome of a wealthy, well-connected woman in the early principate, and she was the template of feminine political involvement the other Julio-Claudian women followed. After Livia, the other Julio-Claudian women were concerned mostly with the preservation of the Julio-Claudian bloodline, as the principate was concerned with concretizing the wealth and power of Rome. When the adoptive emperors came to power, the face of the Roman citizen had changed, due to the expansion of Rome’s borders. As men with foreign blood came to rule Rome, women with foreign blood came to symbolize the height of femininity in the Empire. Thus, when the Antonines came to power, the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> Mattingly (1948) 150.

fecundity and chastity accompanied their rise, together with new hopes of dynasty. The women of the emperors were used throughout the generations to promote the character and virtues of the emperor and the principate.

The deification of these women goes beyond “personal religion.” The Imperial cult was a systematized method of connecting the ruling family to the religious and cultural heritage of the Roman Empire. The imperial women were deified not only to gratify their mourning husbands, sons, or brothers, but also to present to Rome, along with the deified emperors, the *numina* of their Roman identity. The imperial house was a microcosm of the Roman Empire, and its divine nature made its power and excellence accessible to worshippers across the globe.

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